

Organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives

Astrid MOLENVELD

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graad van Doctor in de Sociale Wetenschappen

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Onderzoeksgroep Management & Bestuur

Promotor KU Leuven: Prof. Dr. Trui Steen
Onderzoekseenheid: Instituut voor de overheid

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Prof. Dr. Rudi Laermans [voorzitter]

Prof. Dr. Koen Verhoest [promotor Universiteit Antwerpen]

Prof. Dr. Trui Steen [promotor KU Leuven]

Prof. Dr. Marleen Brans [KU Leuven]

Prof. Dr. Peter Bursens [Universiteit Antwerpen]

Prof. Dr. Per Lægreid [University Bergen, NO]

Prof. Dr. Tiina Randma-Liiv [University of Tallinn, EST]

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Antwerpen, Sint-Jacobsstraat 2 - 2000 Antwerpen, België

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WOORD VOORAF

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Astrid Molenveld, juni 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary society is complex and rapidly changing. Governments are expected to adapt to these changes, to serve the public good, and to prevent contradictions, lacunae, and overlaps (Peters, 1998) in their policies. Especially when governments face crises or new demands—from, for instance, citizens—they are expected to adapt swiftly. The recent financial crisis, for instance, shocked many countries and placed extra attention on the capacity of governments to respond adequately. Other problems, like developing an integrated approach to youth in trouble, require a quick response that distinguishes among the needs of individual youngsters. Programs to reduce administrative burdens are another example. These programs ask for adaptation of the governmental apparatus and its processes to prevent unnecessary procedures for citizens and companies. To effect (swift) adaptation, political leaders, and the organizations under their remit, have to coordinate themselves accordingly. Is a government apparatus geared towards adapting to such sudden crises and newly introduced objectives? Some authors claim that public organizations tend to remain rather fixed (e.g. Parsons, 2002a), while not adapting practices if the environment changes can lead according to others to low performance (e.g. Gumport & Sporn, 1999; Lombardo & Mulligan, 2003).

This thesis focusses on coordination arrangements for cross-cutting policy objectives and on the process in which organizations cope with these coordination arrangements, and adapt (or not) to comply with them (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 18). This is called organizational adaptation, which refers to a process in which changes are instituted in the organization (Cameron, 1984, p. 123). The central question in this thesis is:

What explains organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?

Since horizontal cross-cutting policy objectives pose extra challenges for political or administrative actors, this thesis explores programs to coordinate such issues. In this context, ‘horizontal’ refers to situations that involve organizations at the same level of government. The decision-making processes to coordinate such issues transcend single organizational boundaries, as well as policy sectors and fields. Policy programs set up to coordinate such policy issues (Rittel & Webber, 1973) have a strong impact on all processes in a given policy field, and often require special (coordination) attention from multiple actors, who have their own resources and interests. Moreover, cross-cutting policy programs require actions from multiple organizations to fulfil their objectives. In such situations, there exists,

according to Howlett (2009), an inherent danger of losing the coherence, consistency, and convergence needed for a coordinated response. As a result, the coordination and implementation of cross-cutting-policy programs is highly complex, in terms of interdependencies among actors, uncertainty about risks and consequences of actions, and divergence in viewpoints and values of stakeholders (Head, 2008; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Coordinating the organizational adaptation process also contributes to complexity. According to Head and Alford (2013), this multi-actor complexity creates ‘messy’ coordination arrangements.

1.1. SUB QUESTIONS

This thesis will address the coordination arrangements first by studying how different cross-cutting policy objectives in the Flemish government, such as austerity measures, administrative simplification, and integrated youth care are coordinated. After describing these issues, this thesis will map out and analyze the deployed coordination arrangement to determine whether certain theory-based policy issue characteristics—for example, political urgency, interdependencies, and focus—can explain its type.

Two questions guide this part:

RQ1. *How does the Flemish government organize the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies?*

RQ2. *What policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting policies?*

The second part of this thesis, meanwhile, examines to what extent and how public organizations cope with pressures stemming from these coordination arrangements and adapt to cross-cutting objectives. It studies the extent of organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives in organizational goals and structures by ten specific organizations in the Flemish government. This study determines which theory-based organizational characteristics can explain the extent of organizational adaptation and how the coordination arrangement influences this process.

Three questions guide this part:

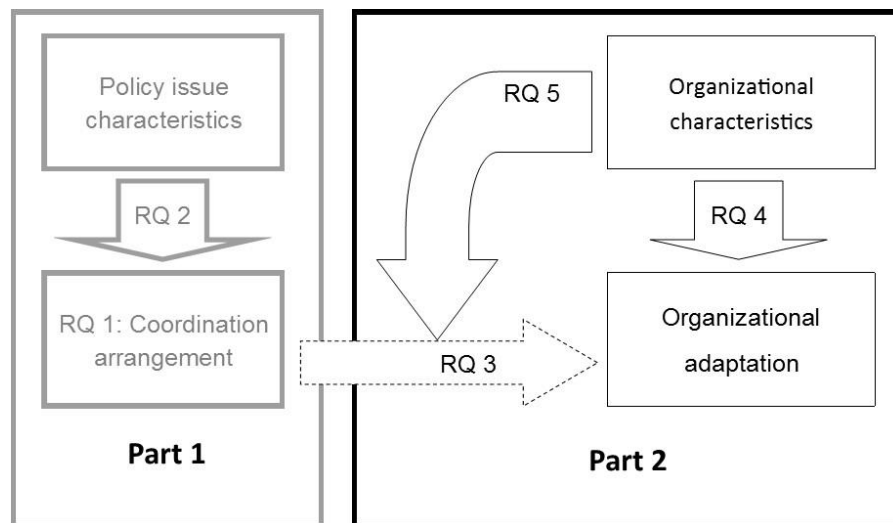
RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

RQ 4: *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

RQ 5: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

Figure 1 shows the research design, the research questions and main concepts of this thesis.

FIGURE 1: RESEARCH DESIGN



1.2. THE RELEVANCE OF COORDINATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

Coordination, both as concept and as a public administration practice, has existed for decades (Hood, 2005). This thesis will connect the concept of coordination to organizational adaptation. As Morgan (1997) explains, organizations are open systems, and there is no ‘good way’ to coordinate them; the coordination arrangement always needs to fit the cross-cutting policy objective at hand *and* the structure of organizations, otherwise they will not adapt. In other words, the design of the coordination arrangement needs to fit both the policy issue characteristics *and* the organizational characteristics. The research design of this thesis concerns these two major needs to unravel this academically and socially relevant puzzle.

Coordination is defined as *“the instruments and mechanisms that aim a voluntary or forced alignment of tasks and efforts of organizations within the public sector”* (Bouckaert, Peters, & Verhoest, 2010, p. 16). Forced alignment has proved difficult and is, therefore, frequently criticized. Scharpf (1994, p. 16), for instance, claims that:

“... the advantages of hierarchical coordination are lost in a world that is characterized by increasingly dense, extended, and rapidly changing patterns of reciprocal interdependence ...”.

Ostrom (1990, 1999, 2005, 2010a), meanwhile, writes that focusing solely on coercive instruments (e.g. sanctions and restrictions) that make organizations adapt, instead of defect, is too narrow. Governments design coordination arrangements to ensure task implementation and programmatic operational success (Marsh & McConnell, 2010). The collection of coordination instruments established to steer one cross-cutting policy objective or program is called a coordination arrangement. These are designed and, therefore changeable. They often evolve and can be conceived of in many different ways.

Scholarly literature often analyzes coordination arrangements as ideal types (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998; Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2009) — for instance, the market-hierarchy-network typology. In practice, governments use increasingly hybrid types of coordination arrangements, which are always dynamic and unstable (Hood, 2000). Achieving precision, by unravelling these hybrid mixes, remains important in order to design new coordination arrangements or reform existing ones (Ostrom, 1986). Knowing more about how to apply coordination approaches to cross-cutting policy asks us to understand the actors, the positions they hold, the actions requiring coordination, and the policy issue characteristics. Furthermore, no comparative studies deal with the question how precisely cross-cutting policy objectives are adapted into the structures and goals of individual organizations and how to strengthen this process. This is what the thesis aims to do.

Many scholars claim that coordination, and organizational response to new demands, has become far more complex, because of organizational autonomy and the complexity of policy problems (Bogdanor, 2005; Bouckaert et al., 2010; Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Peters, 2004; Pollitt, 2003). In fact, fragmentation was introduced through various waves of reforms to the public apparatuses. From the traditional Weberian apparatus to New Public Government (NPM) (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011) to New Public Governance (Osborne, 2010), government continually reinvents itself to cope successfully with policy problems. NPM reforms merged a traditional Weberian bureaucracy with a more instrumental orientation of general management borrowed from the private sector (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011, p. 8), via agencification. In this context, agencification refers to the creation of semi-autonomous organizations that operate more distantly from the central government and carry out public tasks (regulation, service delivery, policy implementation) in a relatively autonomous way. In other words, there is less hierarchical and political influence on daily operations and more managerial freedom (Talbot, 2004, p. 5). Additionally, the coordinating power of central departments is reduced and the autonomy of line departments is strengthened. Public organizations with far-reaching managerial autonomy make the task of steering cross-cutting

policy processes in a hierarchical way more difficult for central governments and other responsible political and administrative principals (Exworthy & Powell, 2004; Jessop, 1997).

Within the Flemish government, which this thesis analyzes, agencification has resulted in particular features. Though Flanders remains a region within the federal state of Belgium, it has its own parliament, elected via a proportional voting system, and multi-party coalition cabinets (Brans & Hondeghe, 2005). There are four structural features which make hierarchy-based and tightly-coupled coordination in Flanders particularly difficult. First, the cabinet in Flanders relies on consensus politics; no minister supersedes another, and the cabinet decides in a collegial manner. The minister president is *primus inter pares* but has no formal authority to instruct other ministers. Second, since the major administrative reform of 2006 (Better Governmental Policy reform, also called 'BBB'), the three central departments responsible for finances, budget, and cross-cutting policies no longer hold the authority to control and instruct line departments and agencies. The BBB reform left mechanisms for horizontal and cross-cutting coordination across the 13 ministries underdeveloped. Third, the BBB reform led to massive new agencification, while maintaining many pre-existing agencies. This reform created 13 departments, 62 departmental and public law agencies, and maintained 120 pre-existing agencies (including private law agencies), some of which overlap with the new agencies. This layering of 'old' and 'new' organizational forms, and the resulting lack of transparency, is certainly not unique in Europe and beyond (for an overview of agencification in 30 countries, see Verhoest, Van Thiel, Bouckaert, & Lægreid, 2011). Fourth, and unique to Flanders, departments have no supervisory power over agencies (not even those in their ministry), and agencies are not obliged to report to their ministerial department. These strictly non-hierarchical relations between departments and agencies create competition among departments and agencies for tasks (like policy development or policy coordination) and power. In most ministries, relations among departments and agencies are conflictual (Rommel & Christiaens, 2009, p. 86). These features make the Flemish government an extreme case of agencification in Europe, and they seem to necessitate loosely coupled or network type of coordination, because the relationships between organizations are strictly non-hierarchical.

1.3. THEORETICAL EMBEDDEDNESS

Comparative and explanatory studies are rare in coordination literature, as the research field is young and without full-fledged theories (6, 2005, p. 52; Beuselinck, 2008). Therefore, this thesis builds on rational choice theory to explain organizational adaptation. To study coordination arrangements, this thesis uses the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework of Rational Choice scholar Elinor Ostrom (Orton & Weick, 1990; Ostrom, 2010a).

Then, to compare coordination arrangements, it uses the concept of 'coupling', which refers to control (Benz, 2007; Chisholm, 1992; Orton & Weick, 1990). In tightly coupled arrangements, authority, instruction, or command are the causal mechanisms. Tight coupling, which Chisholm (1992) defines by transitivity and asymmetry, signifies situations where superiors determine the actions of subordinates. A loosely coupled coordination arrangement is exactly the opposite: roles, tasks and problem definitions are set not by an authority, but by the organizations or members themselves.

To explain organizational adaptation to coordination arrangements for cross-cutting policy objectives, this thesis employs two competing perspectives, both based on Rational Choice Theory: the principal agent - and the stewardship model. The stewardship perspective is seen as a rational theory, because even altruism is regarded by some actors (impure altruism - Andreoni, 1990) as self-interest. For instance, because an actor gains by cooperating, as he or she is intrinsically public service motivated or garners respect. In this way, even the stewardship perspective on organizations is a rational perspective, although more positive. In the adaptation process, actors can either behave as an 'agent' or 'steward'. While the 'agency perspective' is based on organizations as 'self-serving agents' and goal incongruence, the stewardship model emphasizes collectivistic behavior, trust, and goal-convergence, rather than self-interest (Schillemans, 2013; Van Slyke, 2007). Thus, both perspectives establish a framework for exploring how public organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives and cope with coordination arrangements.

1.4. THESIS OUTLINE

Following the research questions, this thesis starts with a theoretical framework in chapter two, which consists of two major concepts: coordination arrangements and organizational adaptation. The theoretical framework discusses and operationalizes the concepts and presents hypotheses. Chapter three contains the methodological design of this thesis. It describes the data collected to study the coordination arrangements and how they are analyzed. The second part of this chapter, meanwhile, explains how organizational adaptation is studied. Chapter four studies the coordination arrangements deployed in three cross-cutting policy objectives; it describes and maps each arrangement, using the Analysis and Development Framework of Elinor Ostrom (2005). Chapter five describes the extent to which organizations adapt to these three cross-cutting policy objectives by examining organizational documents, structures, and goals. It also describes how organizational characteristics and the coordination arrangement can explain this process. The thesis ends with conclusions and a discussion in chapter six.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter develops a theoretical framework to study coordination arrangements deployed in cross-cutting policy objectives and organizational adaptation, in response to these coordination efforts. Coordination and organizational adaptation are major topics in Public Administration. In this chapter these concepts are defined, as well as operationalized, on the basis of existing literature. A theoretical framework is a structure that allows for study and analysis of existing social phenomena in a systematic manner. Another purpose of the theoretical framework is to identify data which are needed to study certain objects. The theoretical framework specifies the way in which I, as a researcher, interpret the concepts of coordination arrangement and organizational adaptation. Furthermore, this chapter tries to give an account of state-of-the-art literature about this topic.

The first part of this chapter focuses on coordination arrangements. This part addresses theories that stem from rational choice, because cross-cutting policy objectives typically present autonomous actors with a social dilemma in which they can cooperate or defect (Joaquin, 2008). To make a thorough description and comparison of coordination arrangements possible, rational choice theory is combined with the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework of Elinor Ostrom (2005, 2010b). Rooted in rational choice theory as well, this framework consists additionally of many elements that emanate from policy (network) analysis literature. The part about coordination arrangements concludes with hypotheses about which policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in specific cross-cutting policy objectives. Two research questions guide the first part of the theoretical framework:

RQ1. *How does the Flemish government organize the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies?*

RQ2. *What policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting policies?*

The second part of this thesis focusses on organizational adaptation, in which a theoretical framework is developed to study organizational adaptation. For the definition of organizational adaptation, this part of the framework mainly builds upon organization studies. The agency perspective and the stewardship perspective, based on rational choice theory are presented as competing theories to explain organizational adaptation. The three research questions guiding the second part are:

RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

RQ 4: *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

RQ 5: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

2.1. DEFINITION OF CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

Cross-cutting policy objectives are defined in this thesis as horizontal issues, policy issues which challenge organizations at the *same level* of government, transcend organizational boundaries, as well as policy sectors and fields, and have an impact on multiple processes. The Cabinet's Office Review (2000b) on cross-cutting policies states that they have many stakeholders, are hard to monitor, and run greater risks in terms of communication problems. To coordinate the policy to resolve these issues they must receive, according to Van Bueren (et al., 2003) special attention from multiple actors with different interests, knowledge and resources. The common characteristic is that cross-cutting policy objectives are impossible to solve by a single individual or organization (Boyle, 1999; Dietz, 2003). Safeguarding a coordinated response and, especially, creating policy cohesion and coherence in the case of cross-cutting policy objectives is a major challenge for governments (Boyle, 1999; Jessop, 1997; Peters, 1998).

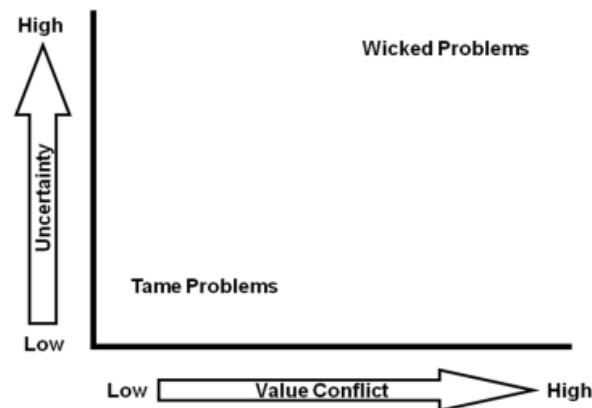
According to Head and Alford (2013), the multi-actor complexities and the subsequent interdependencies between organizations involved in cross-cutting policy objectives lead to uncertainty. As a consequence, coordination arenas tend to be messy and uncoordinated (Klijn, 2007). Cross-cutting policy objectives can bring about different types of uncertainty. First, substantive uncertainty, which relates to the content or the definition of the policy problem. Substantive uncertainty refers to the conflicting understandings, lack of knowledge, or indefinite information about the nature of the problem. Secondly, strategic uncertainty relates to the uncertainty that develops when actors' strategies are unexpected or when actors are unsure about the proper course of action within the cross-cutting policy coordination arena. Separate or even conflicting strategies may lead to deadlocks and create burdens in the policy coordination process. Alternatively, this uncertainty could also incentivize actors to combine their expertise and produce tailor-made and harmonized strategies (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Thirdly, institutional factors also generate complexity in coordination arenas (March & Olsen, 2010; W. R. Scott, 1992). Institutional uncertainty

suggests that cross-cutting policy coordination arenas do not only involve many policy actors, but also that these actors come from diverse institutional backgrounds, are socialized in different settings, and have a different set of rules with which they are 'geared' within the coordination arena (Dietz, 2003; March & Olsen, 2010). In addition to different backgrounds, actors must also contend with resources (i.e. expertise, time, money and staff), necessary to tackle the cross-cutting policy objective, scattered across different organizations (Van Bueren et al., 2003).

The question of how to coordinate cross-cutting policy objectives is closely related to the discussions about 'joined-up-government' and 'whole of government' approaches. Scholars who have researched these themes extensively (6, 2004; Alexander, 1995; Askim, Christensen, Fimreite, & Lægreid, 2009; Bogdanor, 2005; Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004) write that such approaches have multiple aims. Firstly, such initiatives are set up to bundle together all the information necessary to approach the policy problem. Secondly, they stimulate innovative practices because they bring together people with different expertise, professions, and know-hows in a way that reduces substantive uncertainty. Thirdly, they aim to diminish inconsistencies between organizational policies and regulation, which reduces strategic uncertainty. This is done through addressing issues univocally, with, for instance, coherent programs. Fourthly, they are established to improve service delivery, create seamless service, or to offer clients and citizens one-stop-shops (single-point-of-contact) or one integrated approach. Fifthly, they aim to efficiently and effectively use resources by removing overlaps, lacunae, and redundancies. The latter two aims could reduce the institutional uncertainty (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004; Peters, 1998; Pollitt, 2003).

Posing the above concepts and uncertainty types would suggest that cross-cutting policies are wicked problems. The author of this thesis would argue that all wicked problems have, to a certain extent, a horizontal or cross-cutting nature, but not all cross-cutting policy objectives are highly wicked. Rittel and Webber (1973) were the first to talk about 'wicked problems'. Probably the most important characteristic of these problems is that they are socially pluralistic, in that they have multiple stakeholders and bundle interests and values. Most authors pose that the higher the three types of uncertainty and the higher the value conflicts, the more wicked a policy issue is. See, for instance Figure 2, from Batie (2008, p. 1185).

FIGURE 2: HIGH UNCERTAINTY AND VALUE CONFLICTS MAKE POLICY ISSUES WICKED (BATIE, 2008, P.1185)



Head and Alford (2013) argue that there are different kinds of wicked issues, but they all possess a few properties which make them hard to solve (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Firstly, wicked problems remain difficult to describe in terms of content and nature. Second, such problems do not adhere to the fixed and sectoral silos of government. In other words, they are cross-cutting in terms of geography, ideology and expertise. Third, such problems are complex, non-linear, and often need a system change, and, therefore, require a long time scale. Fourth, they are socially constructed and, therefore, contested. Fifth, there are no optimal resolutions to such problems. Finally, they often bear enormous costs for the government and have many consequences for society, the economy, and the environment (Bellamy, 2006; Head & Alford, 2013; Rittel & Webber, 1973; Van Bueren et al., 2003).

As described by Turnpenny et al. (2009) not all uncertain, complex, and high-stake issues are 'wicked' in the same way (e.g. local versus global issues; differences in involvement of stakeholders in different capacities). Whether a policy issue is 'wicked' is hard to establish. There are different conceptual views on the definition, which proves that the concept is hard to operationalize. This, combined with the notion that some wicked issues are wicked because of the institutional complexity of the coordination arrangement, means that this thesis will not use 'wickedness' as a concept. Instead of the 'wicked issue', this thesis uses the concept of horizontal cross-cutting policy objective.

2.2. COORDINATION OF CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

In this part, we dive into the literature about coordination and the logic of collective action. The aim is to build a body of literature to study the coordination of cross-cutting policy objectives. The study of coordination arrangements consists mainly of efforts to construct taxonomies and typologies of coordination instruments, on the basis of their characteristics.

Coordination instruments can all be subsumed under typologies, but purely focusing on typologies risks ‘hollowing out’ the term ‘coordination’. In this part I try to go beyond those typologies—for instance the Hierarchy-Market and Network typology—and create a more holistic view of coordination arrangements, based on the Institutional Analysis and Development framework of Ostrom (2005). This holistic view will be the analytical framework to study coordination arrangements in the Flemish government.

2.2.1. THE LOGIC OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

The focus of this thesis is on cross-cutting policy objectives which are consciously coordinated, bottom-up or top-down, by use of coordination instruments and mechanisms, i.e. coordination arrangements (6, 2014). This coordinated response attempts to optimize the coherence and consistency of political/administrative decisions as well as the organizational adaptation (Wollmann, 2003, p. 594). The organizational response to coordination of cross-cutting policy objectives is seen in this thesis as a collective action, it faces the same challenges as a collective action situation: free-riding, no adaptation, or defection (Askim, Christensen, Fimreite, & Lægreid, 2010; Dietz, 2003).

Organizations tend to prioritize the tasks which are of primordial importance and for which they are accountable and, subsequently, benefit them most (6, Leat, Seltzer, & Stoker, 1999; Boyle, 1999). When confronted with conflicting demands, individual organizations (e.g., departments or agencies) need to make choices that prioritize these demands and their relationships with routine tasks. This makes us wonder how such cross-cutting policy objectives can be coordinated in a way which leads organizations to adapt instead of defect. Cross-cutting policy objectives could result in a ‘tragedy of the commons’, as it is very unlikely that organizations could ‘pay’ the associated cost (e.g. energy, staff, and budget), especially when the expected cost of adaptation outweighs the potential benefit (Ostrom, 2007a).

Together with Garrett Hardin’s ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ (1968), the ‘logic of collective action’, developed by Olson (1971), laid the basis for many studies about how groups with a common interest behave under a model of rational choice. Hardin placed a set of phenomena on the research agenda, which could be referred to as ‘social dilemmas’, and launched the concept of the tragedy of the commons. Classic examples of ‘tragedies of the common’ are sustainable development, poverty, and land sharing. Hardin and Olson specifically challenged the assumption that individual actors would voluntarily act toward a common outcome (Kollock, Argyle, Hinde, Groebel, & Ostrom, 1992, p. 5). Earlier studies of complex networks have proven that organizations and their members are partly motivated by self-interest (Provan & Milward, 2001). Even altruism could be regarded as a reward for some actors (impure altruism, Andreoni, 1990). In this way, even the stewardship

perspective on organizations is a rational perspective, although more positive (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997; Van Slyke, 2007). If actors continuously make cost-benefit analyses before they choose a course of action, why would they ever choose to cooperate to collective action?

The 'tragedy of the commons' idea rests on the assumption that a group can have a common interest but an individual member can have no interest to 'pay' for the provision of that common interest. In other words, individuals are rational beings who will make cost-benefit analyses about certain situations before they will voluntarily contribute to a common goal. Even more extreme, according to rational choice theory, individuals would rather see others contribute the entire cost. Once an individual's cost-share investment exceeds the benefit that can be derived from a common achievement, they will not (or stop to) contribute (Olson, 1971, p. 21).

Free riding is a central concept within the 'logic of collective action' (Ostrom, 1997). Free-riders are those who benefit from the provision of a common outcome without bearing any of the costs. In the collective action in which most organizations or individuals choose to cooperate, the organizations who defect are the free riders because they do not reciprocate cooperation (Hardin, 1968; Kollock et al., 1992; Olson, 1971). A coordination arena is a 'tragedy' when most organizations choose to defect instead of cooperate. We can formally call a situation a 'tragedy of the commons' if a group of organizations is unable to achieve the common outcome and organizational utility becomes the only consideration (Hardin, 1968; Olson, 1971).

According to Scharpf (1990, 2000), rational models do not heed the institutional complexity inherent to the coordination arena. In other words, actors are always rationally bounded in the case of multi-actor complexity. 'Bounded rationality' is a state in which individuals cannot process all available information and alternatives; their rationality is, therefore, limited (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Scharpf, 1990; Simon, 1991). This leads to a situation in which the actor takes "satisficing" decisions, instead of a fully rational choice (Simon, 1961; Daft & Wiginton, 1979). In conventional theoretical prisoner's dilemmas, actors do not know what other actors decide. Therefore, they decide not to risk 'paying' for the common outcome. The prisoner's dilemma—a two-player game—presents an already difficult decision story. The multitude of actors and strategies involved in coordination and implementation of cross-cutting policy objectives, however, presents actors with even more complex situations and cost-benefit analyses (Klijn, 2007; Scharpf, 1997).

In some coordination and implementation processes, there is no 'grand scheme' to coordinate actions, yet every actor chooses his or her own strategies (Hanf & Scharpf, 1978). Hence, the question arises what an organization, a minister, the center of government, or 'the collective' can do to prevent 'a tragedy', and, furthermore, how all these different

strategies and processes could still lead to effective coordination efforts. Many authors recommend preventing ‘tragedies’ through ownership rights, privatization, or central regulating agencies—coercive methods, in other words (Harvey, 2011; Ostrom, 1990). Ostrom (1990) and also Hardin (1968) would consider this ‘one-size-fits-all-solution’ too narrow, because it does not seem to work in a coordination arena with multiple stakeholders, institutions, and interests. Yet, at the same time, a contingent approach is very costly to create and hard to establish (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Lægreid, Sarapuu, Rykkja, & Randma-Liiv, 2014).

Ostrom (1990) argues that one needs mixtures of coercive and deliberative instruments to coordinate the arena and actors. While rational models provide much insight, organizations are not always (or not only) motivated by extrinsic rewards and incentives, and they are not always fully rational, especially not in the case of multi-actor complexity. Therefore, other authors (Jessop, 1997; Ostrom, 1990; Scharpf, 1994; Van Bueren et al., 2003) claim that commonly sharing, deciding, and using deliberative methods, under particular rules-in-use strategies, can help create both consensus and coherent policy. Ostrom (1990) shows that individuals can, and often do, devise smart and sensible ways to manage coordination arenas to benefit both the collective and the individual. Therefore, this thesis provides a fine-grained analysis framework to assess coordination arrangements.

2.2.2. CONCEPT OF COORDINATION

In this thesis coordination is defined as the instruments and mechanisms:

“which aim to enhance the voluntary or forced alignment of tasks and efforts of organizations within the public sector. These mechanisms are used in order to create a greater coherence, and to reduce redundancy, lacunae and contradictions within and between policies, implementation, or management” (Bouckaert et al., 2010, p. 16).

The collection of instruments and mechanisms put in place to steer one cross-cutting policy objective or program is called a coordination arrangement. Coordination has both a process and an outcome dimension (Beuselinck, 2008). Scholars who define coordination as an outcome (Peters, 1998, p. 296) see coordination as *‘an end-state in which the policies and programs of government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae’*. Others (6, 2005, p. 48; Mulford & Rogers, 1982, p. 12) underline the more dynamic perspective of coordination. Wollmann (2003, 594), for instance, sees coordination as a process. According to him coordination is:

'the attempt to optimize the coherence and consistency of political decisions as well as policy implementation across policies ... across actors and stakeholders ... across levels' (Wollmann, 2003, p. 594).

This thesis focusses on the latter: coordination as a process. This thesis, explicitly, does not use the concept of 'governance', because it implies involvement of private actors, citizens, or NGOs in the decision-making process in order to provide common goods. The term governance refers to the 'cooperative state', to co-production and co-creation with private markets and citizens (Benz, 2007; Osborne, 2010; Windhoff-Héritier, 2002). The focus of this thesis is on coordination arrangements *within* the administrative apparatus, *among* public sector organizations. Furthermore, it focuses on coordination arrangements that are deliberately shaped by a political level, center of government, or individual organization to make policy preparation and organizational adaptation more smooth and coherent.

It is, nowadays, common to distinguish three families of coordination instruments: markets, hierarchies, and networks (Alexander, 1993; Bouckaert et al., 2010; G. Thompson, Frances, Levacic, & Mitchell, 1991). Behind these families, there are different mechanisms and logics—e.g. price, authority, and consensus (Bouckaert et al., 2010; A. Jordan & Schout, 2006; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998). Others names for the market hierarchy network, with reference to like-wise mechanisms, include: command, exchange and dialogue (Jessop, 2009); hierarchical (command based on authority), market (exchange, based on price) or solidarity-association (consensus/agreement based on trust) (Alexander, 1995), hierarchies, markets and clans (Durant, 1992), and 'sticks, carrots and sermons' (Bemelmans-Videc, Rist, & Vedung, 2003).

Hierarchy

The first family of coordination instruments consists of authoritarian or supervisory instruments, such as orders and prohibitions (e.g. mandated ministers, rules, and regulations), called the hierarchy mechanism. The mechanism is derived from the idea of rational bureaucracy proposed by Max Weber. This ideal model for organization of the government, according to Weber, resembles a pyramidal structure, with a strong focus on strict formal procedures and authority (Verhoest, Bouckaert, & Peters, 2007). The mechanism is based on authority and control (Bouckaert et al., 2010). In this ideal type, coordination is organized in a top-down manner—in other words, with direct control and formalized rules. Scholars assume that hierarchy leads to norms and standards, routines, inspection, and intervention (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lance, Georgiadou, & Bregt, 2009). As a consequence, there is a clear definition of tasks. Subsequently, it is clear who bears the final

responsibility and who has accountability. As the actors find themselves in positions according to a certain hierarchy, coordination can be effected in a coercive manner.

There are drawbacks to hierarchical coordination, however. At the top of 'the hierarchical pyramid', for instance, the principals overseeing the process tend to lose touch with the administrative base—i.e. the street-level bureaucrats—and, therefore, seem to be 'in an ivory tower' (Cabinet Office, 2000a). Furthermore, the information exchange between the base and the top can be a difficult process, in terms of both overload and deficit (Peters, 1998). Given the limited autonomy of the lower layers of the hierarchy, it remains a rigid and inflexible way to coordinate (Verhoest, Legrain, & Bouckaert, 2003, p. 25). On the one hand, the hierarchical mechanism can orient the behavior of organizations in particular directions, so that they take (cross-cutting) action which they otherwise might not (Alexander, 1995). On the other hand, because the lines of authority are organized mostly in a vertical manner, it is often harder to coordinate horizontal or cross-cutting initiatives.

Market

Another family embraces financial means: the market mechanism, which has its origins in the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith (A. Jordan & Schout, 2006). Coordination in a market-like manner is based on general economic principles, such as competition and trade. It assumes that agents act rationally and aim for profit-maximization. Proponents of this mechanism suggest that it will automatically result in a better allocation of resources and, subsequently, efficiency gains. One factor that plays a significant role in the market mechanism is information (Peters, 1998, p. 298). To speak of competition in a given market, the market must be transparent and accessible. In other words, everyone should have all existing information. This information may, for instance, relate to the quality and the price of certain products or services. Secondly, there should be several suppliers and buyers, so that a choice can be made between the suppliers by the consumers. A monopoly of one provider qualifies as a market failure.

The market mechanism ideal type is less applicable to the study of coordination arrangements *within* the government. Its relevance is, therefore, not big enough to be used in the rest of this thesis. Some of the aforementioned characteristics — e.g. the 'invisible hand' and the 'free market' —are not compatible with the idea in which the government is shaped. A focus solely on the government apparatus—like this thesis does—means that a totally free market is not present, because, for instance, pre-established lines of control and responsibility in the apparatus divide certain tasks to certain actors.

Networks

This family comprises communicative tools, which may focus on consensus building, information sharing, and determining common goals and visions. If there are no hierarchical positions, and when there is no competitive market, the network mechanism will be the only thing on which one can fall back. The network mechanism receives more attention within the government context, partly because of the governance concept and the New Public Governance idea (Osborne, 2010), both of which are gaining ground in the public sector. The use of networks as a 'physical structure' that creates a web of juxtaposed actors or organizations would lead to shared values, common problem analyses, consensus, loyalty, reciprocity, trust, informal evaluation, and reputation (Bouckaert et al., 2010, p. 35). According to classical network theory, there are some conditions that must be met before we can speak of a network. The actors within a network work together to achieve common goals (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). The different actions of the actors should be coordinated in the network in order to achieve policy coherence (Peters, 2004). Moreover, there is mutual trust needed and a shared commitment (Bouckaert et al., 2010, p. 53; McGuire & Agranoff, 2011).

Besides classifying coordination instruments under the umbrella of different mechanisms, there is also another way to distinguish between *types* of instruments. An instrument is either focused on management or structure (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Verhoest et al., 2007). Structural coordination instruments try to reshuffle and (re)install organizational structure. Thus, there is a creation of new structures or a restructuring of current structures. Management instruments, meanwhile, try to coordinate the adaptation process through management of the organization (e.g. performance agreements, indicators). Within this dichotomy, a clustering of coordination instruments would look like the overview in Table 1.

TABLE 1: CLUSTERS OF COORDINATION INSTRUMENTS (BOUCKAERT ET AL., 2010, P. 41;
VERHOEST ET AL. 2007)

Management instruments	Underlying mechanism		
	Hierarchy	Market	Network
Bottom-up and interactive strategic management result oriented financial management systems oriented on information exchange and consolidation according to policy portfolios			
top-down and unilateral strategic management			
traditional input oriented financial management systems			
result oriented financial management systems focused on incentives for units			
Inter-organizational learning: Culture management (e.g. by means of training, rotation, career management, internal job market) Competence and information management			
Procedural instruments concerning mandated consultation and review, mechanism depending on compulsory nature			
Structural instruments	Hierarchy	Market	Network
Reshuffling of competencies: Organizational merger or splits; centralization (decentralization)			
Reshuffling of lines of control: Establishment of a specific coordinating function or entity; lines of control			
Regulated markets: internal markets, quasi-markets, voucher markets and external markets			
Systems for information exchange			
Advisory bodies & consultative/deliberative bodies			
Entities for collective decision making			
Common organizations (partnership organization)			
Chain management structures			

Focusing on ‘ideal type’ coordination mechanisms and instruments creates a risk of ‘hollowing out’ the concept coordination, because we know nothing about the deployment (how is the arrangement used), the actors (who is coordinating and who is being coordinated), and the strength (power, loss of autonomy, intrusion) of the coordination arrangement. These families or mechanisms are ideal types; governments, however, and *de facto*, use increasingly hybrid mixes of coordination mechanisms, which are always dynamic and unstable (Hood, 2000). We know, for instance, that we can place certain instruments under different mechanisms (Lindblom, 2001). A network with a lead organization has, for instance, both network and hierarchy elements. In research, this tends to lead to the conclusion that coordination arrangements are hybrid (Hood, 1995). Alexander (1995), for example, points out that networks as structures can be used when co-ordination is price-based (market-based) as well as when it is trust-based (i.e. network-based). Furthermore, ‘trial and error’ processes and the inevitable alterations that follow the policy design phase often lead to hybrid coordination arrangements (Christensen & Lægreid, 2012). These coordination arrangements, which get their form over time, are often layered upon existing

steering structures or poorly integrated in existing structures. Indeed, they are an amalgam of rules and instruments (Christensen & Lægreid, 2012; Jessop, 1998; Streeck & Thelen, 2009).

Learning how to apply coordination approaches to cross-cutting policy requires to understand the specificity of the coordination arrangements. Understanding such specificity, in turn, remains important in efforts to design new coordination arrangements or reforming existing ones (Ostrom, 1986). Unraveling the hybrid mixes is important; therefore the Hierarchy-Market-Network typology is left in this thesis. The concept of 'coordination area' and the IAD framework are used to provide a fine-grained possibility to describe coordination arrangements and will be elaborated and operationalized in the following paragraphs. This provides an opportunity to answer the first research question (RQ 1): *How does the Flemish government organize the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies?*

2.3. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT (IAD) FRAMEWORK

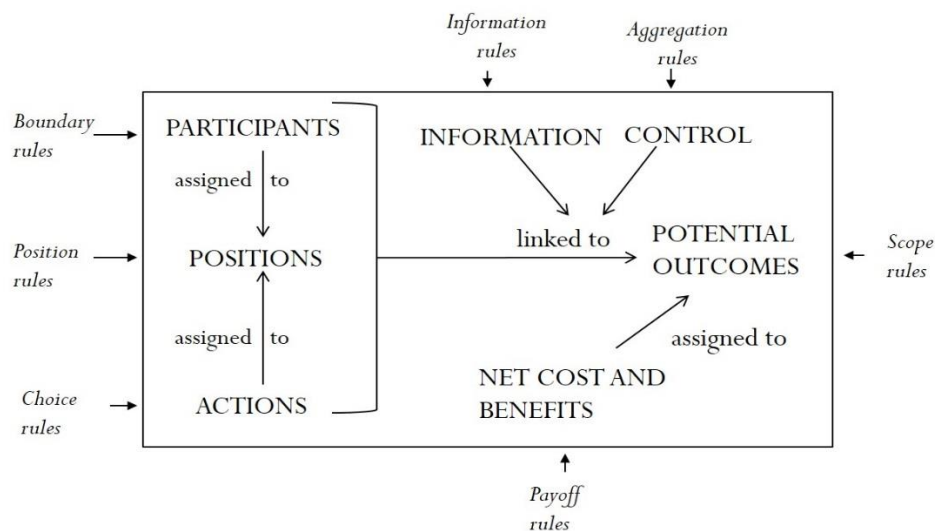
According to (Ostrom, 2005) every policy situation has a few general building blocks, and she calls the aggregate of these building blocks the 'coordination arena'. The notion of coordination arena found its way into the policy analysis literature beginning with the publications of Vincent and Elinor Ostrom (Kollock et al., 1992). A coordination arena is a conceptual 'unit of analysis' (Ostrom, 2007b, p. 27), and it can be used to study actors, (inter)actions, and positions within an arrangement established to coordinate policy actors and actions. 'Arena' refers to a social space where actors choose and change strategies that lead to changes in the decision and adaptation process. Those actors have diverse (organizational) preferences: they interact and exchange resources (time, and services), solve problems, and create conflict (Van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005).

Arthur Benz (2007) uses the term 'connected arenas' to indicate that there is more than one arena in which actors 'play'. While the coordination arena is where all actors involved in a certain policy issue come together, this arena remains connected to other arenas, such as the organizational arena or the home organization. The organizational arena determines for a large part the behavior of an actor in the coordination arena. The outcome of a coordination arena is based upon the extent of organized (or collective) action between independent organizations, in cooperation, to achieve a goal (Ostrom, 2005, p. 6). Actors are subject to various factors determining their behavior, which is formed through particular positions, interests, power, and rules that define the many particular arenas (Benz, 2007). Ostrom and her colleagues developed the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework to study coordination arenas (see Figure 3). The IAD framework is envisioned as a toolkit of elements that an institutional analyst can use to study the actors and actions in a

coordination arena. Its descriptive nature, but still systematic approach to describe policy issues makes the coordination arena concept fruitful for comparisons across coordination arrangements, while simultaneously keeping the rich descriptions of the cases. Studying configurations of characteristics within the coordination arena could lead to an understanding of the coordination of cross-cutting policy objectives (Timmermans, 2001, p. 322).

The IAD framework builds heavily on rational choice theory, but, at the same time, it has a strong sociological approach in that it tries to be an encompassing framework to analyze policy situations (Ostrom, 2005). Zooming in on a coordination arena obviously means a simplification of the complexity inherent in the coordination arena. Interactions, outcomes, and, especially, causalities within the coordination arena are hard to study, but a thick description of the main actors, their positions and actions gives a thorough understanding of the policy situation.

FIGURE 3: INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (OSTROM, 2005, P. 189)



Within the Institutional Analysis and Development framework there are seven elements which describe the coordination arena (Ostrom, 2005, 2007b, p. 27):

- 1) the participants,
- 2) their positions,
- 3) the actions,
- 4) the control,
- 5) information,
- 6) the outcomes, and
- 7) the cost-benefit analyses.

How actors adapt depends on the rules of the game and pressures to which actors are exposed in the coordination and home arenas, the way arenas are linked, and the strategies

that actors apply (Benz, 2007). While the IAD framework helps to explain different aspects of the coordination arena, we need a way to systematically compare the coordination arenas and the arrangements. Therefore, all the elements of the IAD framework will be operationalized on a 4-point 'scale', which allows us to compare different coordination arrangements via these elements. The scale ranges from (1) tightly coupled coordination arrangements to (4) loosely coupled coordination arrangements. Coupling, a causal concept, refers to control and the coupling of actors and participants to the coordination arena and arrangement. The coordination arrangement, operationalized as the rules of the game (and further elaborated upon in the next paragraphs), i.e. either more tightly or more loosely coupled, defines how stringently the environment presses the organizations to adapt (Cameron, 1984).

In tightly coupled arrangements, authority constitutes the prime causal factor to put pressure on the organizations (Chisholm, 1992). Tightly coupled arrangements are defined by transitivity and asymmetry, which means that superiors determine (i.e., 'cause') the actions of subordinates. Rational system analysts claim that such ideal type arenas exist and are, for instance, situations in which the 'arena' decides and all the organizations adapt (W. R. Scott, 1992, p. 284). Hierarchy and control are sometimes met with reluctance by organizations. This occurs because tight coupling can endanger or diminish the autonomy of organizational arenas (Benz, 2007; W. R. Scott, 1992). The coordination arena is tightly coupled with the organizational arena if institutional rules strictly determine how participants adapt to the policies (Benz, 2007).

A loosely coupled arrangement lies on the other end of the scale. This loose coupling concept is similar to self-organization (Benz, 2007) and, according to Jessop (1998), especially useful in the cases of operational autonomy, reciprocal interdependence, and shared interests or projects. Participants have leeway, which they can use to deal with conflicting or complex demands. Interaction and communication occur not as a consequence of instruction or command, but voluntarily on the basis of perceived needs, and trust. Not adapting (deviant behavior) may lead to distrust, but usually this does not lead to the exclusion of participants (Jessop, 1998). Actors who are included in the coordination arena are determined by the issue and the need, not because of the organization chart (Chisholm, 1992; W. R. Scott, 1992). Roles and actions are continuously adjusted on the basis of experience, and tasks are generally established by negotiation. Some networks are loosely coupled arenas because they are trust-based, include autonomous participants, and are not guided by binding rules. Roles and definitions of tasks are set not by any principal, but by the organizations and actors themselves. These kinds of voluntary negotiations have a self-reinforcing mechanism, because they integrate participants in a rather loose manner (Benz,

2007). Because such systems are flat—there is no one ‘center of authority’—they may appear disordered (Chisholm, 1992, p. 54; Landau, 1991).

Loosely coupled coordination arrangements have independent components (the organizations and participants of the arena), whereas tightly coupled arrangements have responsive components that do not act independently (Benz, 2007). Elmore (1979, p. 608) argues that tightly coupled arrangements lead to more checks and decision points, which create, in turn, possibilities for diversion and delay. In a loosely coupled arrangement in turn, discretion works as an ‘adaptive device’:

‘Standardized solutions, developed at great distance from the problem, are notoriously unreliable; policies that fix street-level behavior in the interest of uniformity and consistency are difficult to adapt to situations that policymakers failed to anticipate (Elmore 1979, p. 608)’.

Both types of coupling are failure prone (Benz, 2007; Jessop, 2003). Benz (2007, p. 14) writes, for instance, that if rules of connected arenas are mismatched, policy implementation and decision making are both likely to end in impasse. In loosely coupled arenas, mismatching has less negative impact, because the rules do not steer the actions of the participants as much but provide the participant leeway to adjust in the most suitable way.

The following paragraphs will describe the elements of the Institutional Analysis and Development framework, which leads to a rich and fine-grained method to score coordination arrangements on all their elements. In Annex 1, an overview of all the elements is provided.

2.3.1. BOUNDARY RULES – PARTICIPANT CONSTELLATION

The first element of the IAD framework are the participants (Ostrom, 2005, p. 38). Boundary rules describe how exclusive or open the coordination arena is: who is obliged to cooperate, which actors are included, which are not, and what the exit options are. These boundary rules have either a voluntary or obliged character and tell participants the rules of conduct within the coordination arena (Ostrom, 2005). Organizations are considered to be the participants in this thesis. Like Herbert Simon (1991), this does not mean that we ignore the individual level; rather, it is simply a way of to focus on the aggregate level.

To operationalize this dimension, two elements are combined: the level of institutionalization (based on: Jordan and Schubert, 1992; Waarden, 1992) and the diversity of participants (based on: Bouckaert et al., 2010). The combined dimension is called participant constellation. How open or closed the coordination arena is can be described by the level of institutionalization, which ranges from stable to unstable (G. Jordan & Schubert, 1992). Van Waarden (1992) describes institutionalization as one of the key differences between coordination arenas. A tightly coupled participant constellation is highly

institutionalized, formal, obliged and restricted in terms of access to new participants. An open, *ad hoc* participant constellation, based on voluntary participation, is a loosely coupled arena.

For the diversity of the participants, a distinction is made between vertical and horizontal linkages, in line with Bouckaert et al. (2010). Cross-cutting policies go beyond the boundaries of single organizations and policy sectors, and cut across ministries. One could think of vertical linkages *between levels* of government of one ministry—e.g. central governments, departments and agencies—or horizontal linkages within one level of government—e.g. organizational actions—within multiple *ministries*. In loosely coupled arrangements, the participant constellation is highly diverse, and the boundaries are open, fluent, and accessible to new participants. In tightly coupled arrangements (see left column in Table 2), the participant constellation is closed, and clusters participants from one ministry. The four institutionalization forms in Table 2 are borrowed from Van Waarden (1992, p. 35) and combined with the vertical/horizontal linkages of Bouckaert et al. (2010). This dimension does not concern the centralization of power or the positions in the coordination arrangement. It merely concerns the access and boundaries of the constellation.

TABLE 2: BOUNDARY RULES – PARTICIPANT CONSTELLATION

(1) Participant constellation: tight	(2)	(3)	(4) Participant constellation: loose
Closed/restricted, ordered linkages, Multi-level (more than two) linkages within the ministry	Permanent coalition multi-level (more than two) linkages within the ministry	Ad-hoc relationships (based on committee-, advisory work). Multiple juxtaposed agencies or departments, cross-ministry	Open/fluent, ad-hoc temporary, horizontal linkages, Multiple juxtaposed agencies, departments and external stakeholders

2.3.2. POSITIONS RULES – POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Secondly, next to the participant constellation, participants are, because of rules, agreements and mandates situated in different (formal) positions (Ostrom, 2005, p. 42). The state machinery positions, as well as the positions in a network or a coordination arena determine the extent of power a certain actor has (Klijn, 2007) and his or her bargaining and veto power. Lukes (2005) defines power in terms of whose interests are concerned and served when the outcome is reached. He sees power as a reality in interrelations, rather than an individualistic trait. Pfeffer (1994) describes that being in a good place is the most important thing. This good place is defined by him as: having control over resources, access to information about the participants, activities, the strategies of others and the process, and

formal authority (e.g. a mandate) (Pfeffer, 1994, p. 69). Administrative and political position rules determine who is obliged or mandated to take certain actions (Ostrom, 2005).

Position rules - political position

The political level chooses different strategies, ranging from highly coercive (tightly coupled) to not coercive, with voluntary or no agreements (loosely coupled). These strategies determine the positions of the politicians when they have to steer and get organizations to adapt. In other words, this strategy is their 'backup' on which they can fall back in their relation with organizations. Following Alexander (1995) and Mulford and Rogers (1982), we will describe the political positions by their level of coerciveness or voluntarism.

Van der Doelen (1998) helps us operationalize this dimension (see Table 3). He describes, with respect to regulatory instruments, an interesting development. He explains that the trend is to move away from unilateral, coercive government regulation toward bilateral, voluntary agreements, concluded between actors. The first are highly coercive and tight arrangements. An unilateral coercive government arrangement ((1) in Table 3) leads to a broad horizontal coercive backup for individual ministers, which tightly couples all ministers and the organizations under their remit. The interministerial committee is a temporary coalition between a few ministers, which couples the ministers and their organizations to each other. The forms on the right side of Table 3 are less coercive and loosely coupled arrangements. Column (3) of Table 3 is a negotiated agreement between actors via codes of conduct, gentlemen's agreements, contracts, and covenants. Although structured with a lead minister, the 'backup' is a voluntary agreement. The last form is also lead minister governed, but without a written agreement.

TABLE 3: POSITION RULES - POLITICAL POSITIONS

(1) Highly coercive: tight	(2)	(3)	(4) Low coercive: loose
Unilateral coercive government regulation (with executive orders)- agreement, strong position entire government	Interministerial committee, bi- or multi-lateral agreements	Lead minister governed - negotiated covenants, without regulation or executive orders	Lead minister governed, with voluntary contribution, no written agreement

Administrative position rules – structuration

When focusing on administrative position rules, we can focus on how the arrangement is structured (see Table 4). This dimension builds heavily on the work of Provan and Kenis (2008). Coordination arrangements may be, at one extreme, collectively structured (i.e.

shared) by a separately created administrative organization (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The administrative organization type of coordination is a form in which a separately created unit coordinates the arena and the actions (Provan & Kenis, 2008). An arrangement coordinated by a separately created administrative organization is the most highly structured and most tightly coupled form of coordination. At the other extreme, the administrative positions may not be structured at all and, therefore, participant governed, which is a very loose type of coupling. In this arrangement, members themselves govern their actions which they contribute to cross-cutting policy objectives. Another example of loose coupling occurs when the network (or collective body) acts as the basic entity where activities are coordinated. The arena functions as a collective structure in which consensus can be reached. Column 2 of Table 4 describes an arrangement in which a single coordination arena participant takes on the role of a lead organization (Provan & Kenis, 2008, p. 235) — a form of coordination where one organization within the coordination arena assumes the leading role.

TABLE 4: ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION RULES – STRUCTURATION

(1) Highly structured: tight	(2)	(3)	(4) Low level of structuration: loose
Administrative organization governed (separately created)	Lead organization (either department or agency) governed	Network governed	Internally participant governed

2.3.3. CHOICE RULES - ROOM FOR ACTION

Thirdly, participants have different options for action (Ostrom, 2005, p. 45), informed by their positions, roughly divided into cooperation or defection. The choice rules determine the action capacity of a participant ascribed to a particular position, and they prescribe if the *participant must, must not, or may take action in various situations*. Ostrom (2005) distinguishes between rules, norms and strategies. The Attributes, Deontic, Aims, Conditions, and Or else (ADICO) grammar can help us study if a cross-cutting issue's mission statement consists of a rule, norm or strategy.

1. *Attributes*: who is addressed by the cross-cutting issue mission?
2. *Deontics*: tell something about the prescriptive nature of a cross-cutting objective. If a deontic exists, we know that something is obliged, permitted, and forbidden. This deontic is identified by words like may, should, and must.
3. *Aims*: what is the aim of the actions involved in attaining the cross-cutting objective?
4. *Conditions*: under what circumstances the attribute should do something, what is stated in the aim; for instance, in which period, by which deadline etc.
5. *Or else*: the sanction if the participant does not follow the new demands.

Cross-cutting policy objectives that contain each of the aforementioned components are characterized as rules (ADICO). In a policy issue where there is a guiding rule, there is a strong degree of certainty (Basurto, Kingsley, McQueen, Smith, & Weible, 2010) about what is expected of the participants and tightly couples them to the cross-cutting policy objectives. Objectives containing the first four components (ADIC) are characterized as norms. Objectives which only contain an Attribute, Aim, and Condition (AIC) are considered to be strategies (Siddiki, Weible, Basurto, & Calanni, 2011). Finally, the loosest arrangement is a statement, which consists of an attribute (A) and an Aim (I). Table 5 shows all these forms schematically.

TABLE 5: CHOICE RULES - ROOM FOR ACTION – ADICO SCHEME

(1) Rule (ADICO): tight	(2) Norm (ADIC)	(3) strategy (AIC)	(4) Statement (AI): loose
All the elements	Attribute, Aim, Condition and Deontic	Attribute, Aim, and Condition	Attribute, Aim

2.3.4. INFORMATION RULES – ACCESS AND INTENSITY OF THE INTERACTION

The fourth element of the IAD framework (see Table 6) is the information a participant has about how to reach the cross-cutting objective and the tasks of the other participants. Tight and loose arrangements can both have frequent and numerous information channels. This dimension, however, does not stress the frequency or the amount of information; rather, it stresses the *kind* of information (Ostrom, 2005). Hood (1991) distinguishes between information that tightly and loosely couples organizations. Tight coupling happens when responsibilities are *ex ante* thoroughly described, involving separation of ‘coordination’ and ‘implementation’ activities. There are two tight types: one in which everybody has the same standardized information and another in which the organizations only have information about their own, separate tasks (Hood, 1991, p. 12; Keohane & Grant, 2005, p. 34). As it is the actor with the most amount of information who has a dominant position (Peters, 1998, p. 298), the latter can lead to information protection and ‘bargaining’. In the situation of incomplete information and deficits, the strategies of the participants are ‘messy’ and uncoordinated (Ney, 2006).

One of the looser types of coupling are processes like ‘notice and comment’ procedures (Hood, 1991, p. 13). In these procedures, either a political or an administrative coordinator sets up and coordinates a participative process to comment on a policy plan. In the loosest type of information intensity, there is a rich exchange of information, “*with a relatively high degree of 'slack' to provide spare capacity for learning or deployment*” (Hood, 1991, p. 15). Information, here, is seen as a collective asset. Participants of such loose arenas

communicate on an impersonal, rather than formal, level with each other, which can result in more 'noise' and different conceptions of the task at hand (Beekun & Glick, 2001, p. 232). Furthermore, participants who do not participate in the coordination process lack the information of those who do.

TABLE 6: INFORMATION RULES - ACCESS AND INTENSITY OF THE INTERACTION

(1) Tight and formal information	(2)	(3)	(4) Loose and informal information
Direct formal information, standardized information. Everybody the same task and information	Direct formal information, standardized information. Everybody different task	Information from a coordination function, with possibility to 'notice and comment'	Informal communication, information with room to maneuver.

2.3.5. AGGREGATION RULES – POWER DISTRIBUTION

The fifth element is the control that participants in the coordination arena have, how power is played out, how participants can affect the outcome, and how they reach final decisions (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Aggregation rules determine, for instance, whether a decision by a single or multiple participants is needed to proceed to action and the implementation phase. In other words, aggregation rules can be symmetric (e.g., unanimity, or voting schemes for instance) or non-symmetric—e.g. a leader takes a decision on behalf of the others, such as chairman or lead organization (Ostrom, 2005).

Compared to the administrative position rules, this dimension describes how participants come to decisions in the coordination arrangement. The position rules explain how the positions and the arrangement are structured. How power and authority are played out remains central to the coordination concept (Newman, 2001). The literature tends to focus on three distinct forms, *unicentric* (tightly coupled), *multicentric* (having more than one authority), and *pluricentric* (loosely coupled) (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998; Powell, 1990; G. Thompson et al., 1991). The role of higher authorities in a unicentric form is not to gain or to monopolize power but to perform roles that 'normal' participants are unable to perform: foreseeing threats, disasters, and deadlock, and undertaking long term planning (Mulgan, 1997 cited in: Parsons, 2002). Table 7 shows all these forms schematically.

TABLE 7: AGGREGATION RULES – POWER DISTRIBUTION

(1) Non-symmetric, low power distribution: tight	(2)	(3)	(4) Symmetric, high power distribution: loose
Leader takes decisions, with mandate, sanctions – incentives	Unicentric, e.g. coordinator without sanctions – incentives	Multiple participants, democratic decision-making	Pluricentric; coordinators in multiple organizations

2.3.6. PAY-OFF RULES - COST BENEFIT ANALYSES

The cost-benefit analysis that the participant makes, about the utility that he or she gains by either cooperation or defecting, is the sixth element of the IAD framework (Ostrom, 2005). The 'pay-off' can be either an extrinsic reward or sanction, or an intrinsic valuation (e.g. joy, shame, guilt, Ostrom, 2005, p.52). In government organizations, the payoffs are highly institutionalized through accountability arrangements. Accountability can have a few influences on policy coordination. Firstly, making organizations accountable places emphasis on goal formulation and achievement. Secondly, accountability systems can enable participants to comprehend the potential benefits of and pay attention to targets. Thirdly, detecting and resolving overlap and conflicts can be a collective goal (Özerol, Bressers, & Coenen, 2012).

Fox (2007) helps to operationalize this dimension by discussing two basic dimensions of accountability:

1. Answerability 'soft face', for instance peer review– the loosest type of accountability, which signifies dissemination and access to information (see (4) in Table 8).
2. The 'hard face' form of accountability, which includes *answerability* plus the possibility of sanctions. Answerability means that organizations have the obligation to answer questions regarding their decisions and actions to a certain coordination function (Fox, 2007 cited in: Schedler, 1999).

Type (2) and (3) in Table 8 are types of institutional answerability: one type without inspection, sanctions, or rewards, and the other with these. The tightest form is what Fox (2007) calls the hard accountability type: performance-based accountability with sanctions and the possibility to investigate actual institutional behavior.

TABLE 8: PAY-OFF RULES - ACCOUNTABILITY

(1) Hard Accountability	(2)	(3)	(4) Soft Accountability
Performance-based accountability, with sanctions or rewards, with possibility to investigate actual institutional behavior (e.g. inspections)	Institutional answerability to specific coordination function, with sanctions or rewards	Institutional answerability to specific coordination function, no inspections, sanctions or rewards	Dissemination and access to information, no sanctions or inspections - Peer review

2.3.7. SCOPE RULES - INTENSITY

Lastly, the scope rules describe the range of possible outcomes, and they specify the ultimate goal that must be achieved (Ostrom, 2005, p.209). They affect what is allowed, mandated, or forbidden in order to reach the cross-cutting objectives. These are the envisioned outcomes, not on the level of the participants, but on level of 'the collective'. The scope is, in the majority of instances, explicated in general mission statements. A loosely coupled arrangement is, for instance, a cross-cutting policy program in which organizations are appointed as a 'supplier' to the program and in which there are only informal contacts (Keast, Mandell, Brown, & Woolcock, 2004). The coordination arrangement can also stimulate or facilitate cooperation, coordination or collaboration between participants (based on: Keast, Brown, & Mandell, 2007). Cooperation is the exchange of information between organizations. The function of the coordination arrangement is coordination, when participants coordinate independent actions. The last scope, and the tightest way of coupling, is an intense mode of collaboration in which organizations create or collaborate to invent something new (e.g. a managerial system). Table 9 presents an overview of all the scope types.

TABLE 9: SCOPE RULES: INTENSITY (KEAST ET AL., 2007)

(1) High intensity: tight	(2)	(3)	(4) Low intensity: loose
Collaboration: synergize to create something new/systems change	Coordination of otherwise independent action; joint effort/joint planning	Cooperation: dialogue, information sharing	Informal

The paragraphs above set up an analytical framework to study the different elements of coordination arrangements. In Annex 1 all the aforementioned tables are merged into one overview table.

A *tightly coupled coordination arrangement* has a closed and restricted participant constellation in which a (political) leader takes decisions and is aimed at collaboration, it is based on unilateral agreements, rules and performance based accountability, and is governed by an administrative organization and direct formal information channels.

A *loosely coupled coordination arrangement* has an informal, open and temporary participant constellation, in which multiple organizations take their separate decisions and govern their own actions, it is lead minister governed based on a mission statement, information exchange happens through informal communication channels and the accountability system is based on peer review.

The literature points us towards three policy issue characteristics which can explain why a coordination arrangement gets its particular form. The political urgency, the interdependencies and the focus of the policy issue are hypothesized to have an influence on the form of the coordination arrangement. In the following paragraph these policy issue characteristics are explained.

2.4. HYPOTHESES: INFLUENCE OF POLICY ISSUE CHARACTERISTICS

The first part of this chapter defines and operationalizes the coordination arrangement as the collection of instruments and rules that guide participants and their positions, room for action, abilities to control, avenues to information, outcomes and cost-benefit analyses. Such an arrangement is deployed to steer organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives. This paragraph presents the hypotheses concerning the first part of the thesis.

Some authors (Alexander, 1995; Peters, 1998; Turnpenny et al., 2009) suggest that the 'character' of the policy issue can provide an indication for an appropriate means to coordinate a cross-cutting policy objective. The literature points to different characteristics of policy issues, which are assumed to explain the functioning of the coordination arrangement (either loosely or tightly coupled). These characteristics include political urgency, interdependencies, and the focus of the cross-cutting policy objective itself. These hypotheses are the theoretical basis to answer the second research question (RQ2): *What policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting policies?* The policy issue characteristics are explained in the following paragraphs.

2.4.1. POLITICAL URGENCY

The political urgency of a policy problem can influence the either tight or loose coupling of the coordination arrangement. Here, the word *urgency* stresses both the political salience of the problem and the time horizon that is envisioned to achieve the cross-cutting policy objectives. Kickert (2012), for instance, claims that the choice for either a tight (hierarchical) or loose (network) approach depends on the importance and acuteness of a policy issue. The current paragraph will first address salience and then the time horizon.

Political salience signifies an issue's importance and the degree to which it is a problem (Wlezien, 2005, p. 555). An issue is important if many people care about it—for instance, health care (Green-Pedersen & Wilkerson, 2006) or, in the case of this thesis, integrated youth care. Something is only a problem if there are causal social conditions—in the case of poverty, for instance: high unemployment, inflation, and low GDP (Wlezien, 2005). The austerity measures investigated in this thesis are both important—people care about the high taxes and government spending—and problematic—because of the financial crisis. We can, therefore, call them salient. Peters (2011) suggests that when governments face politically salient problems, they tend to fall back on hierarchy and shift responsibility upwards to the highest level of government, to presidents, prime ministers and central departments. In other words, policy issues that could be successfully dealt with through market mechanisms or networks are driven towards hierarchy-based approaches because of limited timespans and political urgency. The approach to the crisis is, hence, politicized (Peters, 2011). When policy issues are urgent and linked to crises, the public generally wants political leaders to solve the issues and, therefore, holds them accountable. Political leaders, in turn, are very attentive to these issues and use their hierarchical position to impose priorities via tightly coupled coordination arrangements (Kickert, Randma-liiv, & Savi, 2013; Peters, 2011; Stern & Sundelius, 1997).

Concerning the time dimension, we learn from Jessop (1998) that different coordination arrangements can be chosen to handle different time horizons. Although some scholars (e.g. Jones & Baumgartner, 2008) say that 'new issues' can be pressed successfully without the short time horizon, it is precisely this short time horizon that seems to effect a tight, rather than loose, approach. Jessop (1998) suggests that the loose approach with an open structure is well suited for policy issues with a long time horizon, because it preserves flexibility. Some authors (e.g. Peters, 2011) suggest that a loose involvement of actors in early stages slows down the decision-making process but may deliver better information and improve the quality of decisions. In case of short-term objectives, the involvement of, for instance, high-level civil servants from line departments and agencies could be important

because politicians and central departments need sufficiently detailed and high-quality information (e.g. Kickert, 2012; Levine, 1978; Pollitt, 2010).

On the one hand, there are scholars who suggest that some cross-cutting policy objectives call for a hierarchical, centralized, top-down approach—for instance, in times of budget crises (Behn, 1985; Levine, 1978). On the other hand, there are scholars who claim that a decentralized and loose approach might be a good choice for governments, because organizations need room to maneuver and experiment.

When we specifically focus on the austerity measures, we see that the cutback literature describes that such an issue calls for a hierarchical, centralized, top-down approach (Behn, 1985; Levine, 1978). Behn (1985) argues that political leadership should be aggressive, sometimes coercive in this situation; a political leader must define the overarching issues and the specific cuts and build political support. Seeking bottom-up involvement in the early stage of austerity measures might be wise, but using a network-based, loosely coupled approach throughout the whole process would create turf wars and conflicts, as organizations remain unlikely to volunteer in organizational decline. Schick (1986) even writes that unconstrained, bottom-up processes in the context of austerity measures lead to conflictual situations during negotiations between the politically-responsible leaders and the line ministries or agencies facing cuts. Civil servants in line departments and agencies, furthermore, tend to become demoralized in the 'cutting back' process because of the tighter controls and less budgetary discretion (Schick, 1988, p. 529). In order to maintain progress and to deal with conflictual situations, top-down hierarchy could be exercised.

Based on previous studies, the hypotheses are that:

- *H1a. Tightly coupled coordination arrangements* are deployed to coordinate politically urgent policy issues—i.e. cross-cutting policy objectives which are political salient and have short time horizons.
- *H1b. Loosely coupled coordination arrangements* are deployed to coordinate policy issues which are less urgent—i.e. cross-cutting policy objectives which are less politically salient and have long time horizons.

2.4.2. INTERDEPENDENCIES

There is a range of different strategies and tools to coordinate the multi-actor coordination arena. When conducting actions, organizations can be totally independent, but frequently, and especially in the case of cross-cutting policy objectives, there are interdependencies between actors (Chisholm, 1992). In line with Lindblom (1959) and Chisholm (1992), interdependencies are defined as:

“occurring whenever actors interfere with or contribute to the goal achievement of another actor, either by direct impact or through a chain of effects that any given actor only can continue through effects by others” (Chisholm, 1992, p. 43).

An organizations' interdependence with other organizations causes uncertainty for an organization. Even if the organization achieves an understanding of such relations, it may not be able to control these relations satisfactorily. According to O'Toole and Montjoy (1984, p. 492), *“The result of policy implementation depends on the type of interdependence required”*. O'Toole and Montjoy (1984) make a typology of different kinds of interdependence. Interdependence ranges, according to them, across a continuum from pooled to sequential to reciprocal.

1. *Pooled interdependence* occurs when the organizations have to fulfill actions but are not dependent on each other in doing so. An example of this is a cross-cutting program in which every organization has to deliver the same action—in other words, ‘across-the-board-policy’ (percentage budget cut, research budget, good governance guidelines, etc.). These kinds of policy programs often need only a low degree of coordination or no coordination at all, and they deliver quick results.
2. *Sequential interdependence* is a situation in which the output of one unit is the input of another—i.e. a chain. This is an intermediate form of interdependence, as an organization has its own task, but a delay or breakdown in the chain can affect others vis-a-vis implementation.
3. Agencies are *reciprocally interdependent* if they must adjust mutually to coordinate actions. Such interdependencies require bargaining about the interdependencies and the substance of the policy issues. This creates both opportunities and difficulties. The organizations pose contingencies for each other, which:

“include high levels of uncertainty for the participants [...] Situations of reciprocal interdependence contain sufficient uncertainty to allow participants to resort to “games” or “ploys” in their quest to reach agreements on favourable terms” (O'Toole Jr. & Montjoy, 1984, p. 494).

These different patterns of independencies inherently lead, according to Jessop (1997), to different coordination arrangements. Scharpf (Scharpf, 1994, p. 37) writes:

“... the advantages of hierarchical coordination are lost in a world that is characterized by increasingly dense, extended, and rapidly changing patterns of reciprocal interdependence,

and by increasingly frequent, but ephemeral, interactions across all types of pre-established boundaries, intra- and interorganizational, intra- and intersectoral, intra- and international”.

Even more strongly, Jessop (1997) writes that interactions characterized by reciprocal interdependence are resistant to tightly coupled coordination arrangements—they do not accept top-down command or lead organizations. Hood (1991) explains that, in situations of pooled interdependence, when goals are fixed and segmented, one does not need slack and room to maneuver. Pooled interdependence leads to standardization of norms and a technological infrastructure of reporting that tightly couples every organization to the cross-cutting policy objectives. Some might argue that low interdependence could also mean that there is no interest in coupling (or coordination). As said before, indeed pooled interdependence often means less coordination. Moreover, this thesis focuses on different cross-cutting policy objectives, including those with low interdependence in which there is an interest in coordination.

In the case of reciprocal or sequential interdependence, a tightly coupled arrangement is not suitable because it is not attuned to fast-changing interactions and reciprocal relationships (Scharpf, 1994). Furthermore, a tightly coupled approach could provoke resistance from the implementing organizations if they are interdependent. They do not accept top-down command.

Based on previous studies, the hypotheses are that:

- *H2a. Tightly coupled coordination arrangements* are deployed to coordinate cross-cutting policy objectives that are characterized by low interdependence (pooled interdependence).
- *H2b. Loosely coupled coordination arrangements* are deployed to coordinate cross-cutting policy objectives that are characterized by high interdependence (reciprocal interdependence).

2.4.3. Focus

The either externally or internally oriented focus of policy issues can affect the design of the coordination arrangement. By externally, we mean aimed at the society, citizens, or companies, whereas by internally, we mean focused on managerial issues and other government organizations. Internally oriented types of cross-cutting policies deal with the management of the internal administration (e.g. rationalization of management support functions, austerity measures). Externally oriented types, meanwhile, deal with large social issues (e.g. poverty, sustainable development).

According to Bekkers et al. (2013), research has shown that a strong external focus on customers brings about an impetus to meet and engage the stakeholders in policy decisions in order to improve services, products, and processes. In a situation where the policy issue is externally focused a loosely coupled approach is more likely, as it gives organizations room to maneuver. Policy issues with specific tasks and activities or more managerial and internal issues go well together with a short time horizon and tight coupling (Jessop, 1998). The expectancy is that internal or managerial issues, in which goals are more easily explicated, are coordinated with tightly coupled arrangements. A tightly coupled approach works in the case of activities with a few dividable tasks, which are concrete, specific, explicit, and standardized. When goals are specifically defined and tightly coordinated, it becomes clearer which tasks must be fulfilled with which target groups. It makes it easier for organizations to prioritize the cross-cutting policy objective (Christensen, Lægreid, Roness, & Røvik, 2007, p. 81).

According to Elmore (1979), tight coupling is too rigid and difficult to change to new situations. The traditionally vertical oriented government, where the focus is on internal departmental practices and hierarchical relationships, works as a disincentive for street-level bureaucrats (Bakvis & Juillet, 2004; Elmore, 1979). According to Head (2008), street-level bureaucrats look through the lens of practical knowledge and favor processes, relationships, and networks with clients, customers, and umbrella organizations in order to achieve sustainable results. Politicians are, according to Head (2008), “*inherently impatient for results*” and would consider such a process too time-consuming.

Based on previous studies, the hypotheses are that:

- *H3a. Tightly coupled coordination arrangements* are deployed to coordinate cross-cutting policy objectives which are operational and focused on concrete, specific internal management issues.
- *H3b. Loosely coupled coordination arrangements* are deployed to coordinate cross-cutting policy objectives which are focused on externally oriented issues.

Table 10 summarizes the hypotheses concerning the coordination arrangements.

TABLE 10: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CROSS-CUTTING POLICY PROGRAMS

Level of political urgency	H1a. High	H1b. Low
Interdependencies	H2a. Pooled	H2b. Reciprocal
Focus	H3a. Internal	H3b. External
Expectation	Tightly coupled approach	Loosely coupled approach

2.5. ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION TOWARDS CROSS-CUTTING POLICY

The environments that organizations inhabit, and the management demands that they face, change constantly. In this thesis, we consider adaptation as a way in which organizations can deal with these environmental demands. Cross-cutting policy objectives are seen as one of these new demands for public organizations. Hardin (1968) states that policy problems based on the logic of collective action have no technical solution. They require change in human behavior and “*adaptivity*” of organizations (Ostrom, 1990, p. 29). An effective organization should adapt strategically to enhance and maintain policy effectiveness (J. Thompson, 1967), yet many tend to remain rather fixed according to some authors (e.g. Parsons, 2002). If core practices stay the same while the environment changes, low performance outcomes are likely (Gumport & Sporn, 1999; Lombardo & Mulligan, 2003).

This thesis focusses on coordination arrangements for cross-cutting policy objectives and on the process in which organizations cope with these coordination arrangements, and adapt (or not) to comply with them (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 18). In order to define organizational adaptation, this part of the analytical framework mainly builds upon organization studies. Indeed, it provides a framework to answer the research questions. The agency perspective and the stewardship perspective, based on rational choice theory, are presented as competing theories of explanation. This section will conclude hypotheses that give a theoretical answer to the third, fourth and fifth research question:

- RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 4: *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 5: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

2.5.1. THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

Organizational adaptation is the process in which organizations cope and weigh environmental demands and the adaptation required to comply with them (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 18). The concept of organizational adaptation stems from the open systems perspective on organizations (W. R. Scott, 1992), and it refers to:

“modifications and alterations in the organization or its components in order to adjust to changes in the external environment. Its purpose is to restore equilibrium to an imbalanced condition. Adaptation generally refers to a process, not an event, whereby changes are instituted in organizations. Adaptation does not necessarily imply reactivity on the part of an organization (i.e., adaptation is not just waiting for the environment to change and then reacting to it) because proactive or anticipatory adaptation is possible as well. But the emphasis is definitely on responding to some discontinuity or lack of fit that arises between the organization and its environment” (Cameron, 1984, p. 123)

Many dimensions of adaptation have been studied, including restructuring, improved performance, reorganization, revised autonomy, and accountability (Gumport & Sporn, 1999; W. R. Scott, 1992). Yet many scholars remain puzzled about whether or not institutions under pressure adapt to new problems and demands (Cameron, 1984; de Zilwa, 2010; Gumport & Sporn, 1999). McLaughlin (1987) describes a model of policy implementation, which he calls locally defined change, that covers the concept of adaptation. With this term, he states that

“implementors at all levels of the system effectively negotiate their response, fitting their action to the multiple demands, priorities, and values operation in their environment and the effective authority of the policy itself” (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 175).

The concept of adaptation is closely linked to institutional isomorphism (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), which argues that the survival of organizations depends on the level of incorporation of external structures and demands. This legitimizes organizations and shows their commitment to principals and peers (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 359). While this concept refers to the similarity of certain processes or structures of one organization with those of another, this thesis stresses the extent to which an organization adapts, aligns, and integrates cross-cutting policy objectives into its own organization. Adaptation, then, refers to the process of *instituting structural changes* prompted by the environment into the organization. The concept nuances the classification of organizational responses to new

policies from the dichotomous 'cooperate' and 'defect' to more subtle forms of organizational adaptations (Joaquin, 2008, p. 5; Oliver, 1991). Adaptation can be internal and passive, implementing decisions that have been taken in the coordination arena (e.g. just complying with), or more active, focusing on modifying or changing the environment (e.g. influencing the decision-making process). In other words, adaptation is a continuum from compliance adaptation to proactive adaptation (Cameron, 1984, p. 124; Joaquin, 2008, p. 5). Furthermore, adaptation underlines the notion of evolution in both the environmental and organizational sphere, while connecting both (Joaquin, 2008, p. 17).

The efforts, arrangements, and processes in the coordination arena can affect organizational adaptation, but this seems to be only one kind of environmental demand on government organizations. Organizations may experience some pressures from this arrangement and subsequently adapt their documents, goals and structures. At the same time, there are other influencing factors—like capacity, other priorities, and tensions—that can both hinder or affect organizational adaptation. For instance, 6 et al. (1999, p. 27) stress a few other pressures that organizations face: other cross-cutting policy objectives, pressures to achieve government manifestos, and short term pressure on 'popular demands' with quick wins for political actors. Some scholars claim that managers focus only on those objectives for which they are accountable (i.e. objectives set by their portfolio minister), neglecting all objectives related to collaboration and cross-cutting policies. Adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives remains, because of these conflicting demands, challenging for organizations and, therefore, particularly interesting to study.

Scholars who study organizational adaptation typically focus on organizational characteristics, which can explain the type of adaptation, such as its history, leadership, culture, and power (Hernes, 2005, p. 8). Though this thesis focuses on organizational characteristics, it specifically focuses on the influence of size, autonomy, and the policy task of the organization on structural adaptation.

2.5.2. HOW TO STUDY ADAPTATION?

Structural adaptation is, according to Christensen et al. (2007), based on the logic of consequence. When an organization adapts in terms of structure, it rationally aligns its objectives, structures, and actions to the cross-cutting policy objectives. Structural organizational adaptation is operationalized as the extent to which the organization aligns its goals, monitors the cross-cutting policy objectives, allocates resources, and if it appoints tasks and responsibilities to specific staff members. In other words, if the organization is integrating the cross-cutting policy objectives in its organizational goals, structures, and actions (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

1. *Aligning goals*; translating the goal to organizational-specific tasks makes the goal visible, 'monitorable', and an explicit objective for members.
2. *Monitoring goals*; another part of structural adaptation is the extent of monitoring. Monitoring, first of all, ensures that the objectives are attended to, yet it also maintains pressure for actions—for instance, during management committee discussions (6 et al., 1999; Boyle, 1999). Monitoring tasks and objectives also places emphasis on goal formulation and achievement. Indeed, monitoring and evaluation systems allow employees to comprehend goals and focus on objectives (Özerol et al., 2012).
3. *Allocating financial resources*; allocating financial arrangements to the cross-cutting policy issue objective can serve as an influential form of task allocation (Bouckaert et al., 2010). Doing so emphasizes that the allocated budget must be spent on the cross-cutting issue. Furthermore, it incentivizes staff and management to monitor the budget and, therefore, the cross-cutting actions (Boyle, 1999).
4. *Appointment of a responsible staff member*; appointing someone to coordinate the progress of the cross-cutting objective ensures organizational attention to the objective itself. This appointed person needs a specific skills set. Working across boundaries requires skills such as handling multiple points of accountability in different structures and value systems, being accountable for things beyond your control, and understanding different jargons (6 et al., 1999).

Börzel and Risse (2003) describe three levels of adaptation. They apply this classification to domestic change of nation states to EU policies, but the operationalization also applies to structural adaptation to policy issues. First, *absorption* is the incorporation of policies or ideas into internal documents and structures, without substantially modifying existing processes, policies, and structures. Secondly, *accommodation* is adapting existing processes, policies and institutions without changing their essential features and the underlying collective understandings attached to them. Börzel and Risse (2003) posit that one way of doing this is “*patching up’ new policies and institutions onto existing ones without changing the latter*” (Héritier, 2001, cited in: Börzel & Risse, 2003). Finally, there is *transformation*: organizations replace existing policies, processes, and structures with new, substantially different ones, or alter existing ones so that their essential features and/or the underlying collective understandings fundamentally change.

Apart from structural adaptation, there are cultural and mythical adaptation. These forms of adaptation offer insight, but do not represent the main focus of this thesis.

Cultural adaptation occurs as a cross-cutting objective is institutionalized (becomes a part of the organization) (A. Jordan & Schout, 2006; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Salamon, 2002). This

concept stems from a cultural perspective on organizations (Christensen, Lægreid, et al., 2007), and builds on the logic of appropriateness. In the case of adaptation towards cross-cutting policy objectives and new demands, this logic implies that organizations seek to adopt only the rules and demands that fit their structure (Sager, 2009). Adapting only in structure to the cross-cutting objectives is not enough for organizations to internalize them (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). As Christensen and Lægreid (2007) suggest, organizations need another attitude for cross-cutting initiatives to work, which requires time as well as leadership and a social contract that embodies a cross-cutting attitude. One of the aspects that Ling (2002) stresses with respect to attitude, which this study will take into account, is the commitment and attention to these issues throughout policy preparation and implementation.

Mythical adaptation suggests that public organizations always feel the need to legitimize themselves and look for efficiency. As Christensen and his colleagues explain:

“Myths can spread quickly, through imitation, and they can be adopted by public organizations without producing instrumental effects, that is, they may sometimes function as ‘window dressing’. Leaders of public organizations can, for instance, talk about reforms in a way that makes people believe they are putting reforms into practice while in reality the leaders do little to make this happen”. (Christensen, Lægreid, et al., 2007, p. 57)

Why would organizations do that? Christensen et al. (2007) argue that focusing solely on structure can possibly reveal merely an organizational ‘myth’ and effective decoupling-‘tactics’ (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), but no real adaptation. The concept of decoupling comes from Meyer and Rowan (1977), who demonstrate how public organizations appear simultaneously efficient and legitimate by effectively decoupling their structures. These organizations maintain a façade, a ‘false belief’ (Pettigrew, 1979, p. 575), and show the image of the good organization: *“Inside the organizations, however, the actual state of the organization tended to be different and more oriented towards the tasks at hand”* (Hernes, 2005, p. 7).

2.5.3. HOW DO AGENTS AND STEWARDS ADAPT?¹

Agency and stewardship theories, which explain types of relationships between organizations and their principals, provide competing hypotheses about how external pressures motivate organizations and force them to react. As this chapter states in its

¹ The hypotheses in the current and next paragraph are based on a conference paper, presented at the EGPA conference 2014 (see: Molenveld, Verhoest, & Wynen, 2014)

opening paragraphs, according to rational choice theory actors have no incentive to support cross-cutting policy objectives. If they calculate that the costs of cooperation are high, and that their participation has no significant effect on the organization's power and resources (or that they could even lose these), they will conclude that there is nothing to gain from collaboration. Again and again, however, studies show that people do join collaborations and become active in them, which suggests that the simple rational action model misses something. Olson (1971) has suggested that collective action is sustained through what he calls 'selective incentives'. Principal agent models, meanwhile, propose an intentional role of actors in enabling coordination through the design and implementation of positive and negative incentives. It is expected that these incentives can steer behavior in a specific direction to align to certain predefined goals (J. Scott, 2000).

2.5.3.1. The agency perspective

The agency perspective on organizations (based on the principal-agent model) argues that organizations are utility-maximizing groups that prioritize the tasks of primordial importance to them, for which they are accountable, and benefits them the most. This behavior leads to agents selling minimal efforts at a maximum price and shirking responsibilities (Schillemans, 2013). Seen from this perspective, public organizations are motivated by extrinsic rewards and want to secure and enhance their own organizational legitimacy and survival. Any challenge to these ultimate extrinsic rewards creates strong resistance (W. R. Scott, 1992).

Public sector organizations, within their statutorily defined objectives, need to balance objectives with the limited resources at their disposal (6 et al., 1999, pp. 27–28). When confronted with conflicting demands, e.g. cross-cutting policies and their routine tasks, individual organizations (be it departments or agencies) need to make choices how to prioritize these demands (6 et al., 1999). Integrating cross-cutting objectives into organizational activities and standard operating procedures, in most cases, implies realignment of existing activities, change of procedures, new activities, or re-orientation of focus, as well as interaction with other actors (ministers, departments, and agencies). Such an integration demands resources and efforts, not only to plan, monitor, and evaluate these objectives, but also because of the implied changes to primary processes in the organization. Individual organizations perceive cross-cutting objectives therefore as labor-intensive, and they must re-steer their organizations towards the achievement of those goals. This is very costly, and it does not allow the organization to focus on the alignment of vertically-defined sectorial organizational goals (Christensen, Fimreite, & Lægreid, 2007).

Furthermore, cross-cutting problems and their solutions are, by definition, complex, while the risk of failure is higher than those for problems and solutions confined to a single sector or organization (6 et al., 1999). Senior managers of public sector organizations remain less willing to invest significant resources and time in activities with a high chance of failure (6, Leat, Setzler, & Stoker, 2002) when they can safeguard their positions by investing in simpler single-sector policies that align with the primary purpose of their organizations. When cross-cutting policies are highly salient, incentives for individual organizations to prioritize these policies are low. 6 et al. refer to such a situation in which *"the project has too high a political profile to be allowed to fail. The effect of this message is that managers become unwilling to undertake risky initiatives"* (1999, pp. 26). Moreover, when cross-cutting objectives are mostly long-term oriented (Lægreid, Randma-Liiv, Rykkja, & Sarapuu, 2013), organizations will contribute less value to them, because they do not expect to benefit in the immediate future (Kollock et al., 1992). Therefore, according to this perspective, it is unlikely that organizations will voluntarily contribute to cross-cutting objectives. Individual organizations mainly perceive cross-cutting objectives as claims for scarce organizational resources and efforts which compete with the vertically-defined sectorial organizational goals.

In the agency perspective, cross-cutting objectives are competing claims for organizational resources, and their achievement implies problems of overcoming low organizational motivation, urging for external control and incentives (Davis et al., 1997). Bouckaert, Peters, and Verhoest (2010) argue that a low interest in alignment is one of the most prevalent failure factors for coordination. Organizations' fear that coordination will negatively influence the effectiveness of policies and services is one of the main factors for failure of coordination (Rogers & Whetten, 1982). Hence, the coordination of these objectives becomes a problem for the involved (political) principals. Coordination of cross-cutting objectives is, in this perspective, mainly achieved via top-down steering and incentives that impose collaboration on organizations. Tightly coupled coordination arrangements which entail control, strong institutionalization, and hard accountability— fit the agency perspective (Schillemans, 2013). The perspective assumes that the administrative or political principal, or lead organization, exercises this because it fears information asymmetry and goal incongruence.

The hypothesis on the basis of the agency perspective is that:

- H4a. Organizations under tightly coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly

The next section will introduce an alternative, more optimistic perspective on organizational adaptation to cross-cutting objectives.

2.5.3.2. Stewardship perspective

The alternative perspective is more optimistic about the willingness of single organizations to invest in coordination and cross-cutting objectives. The stewardship model goes beyond the *narrow* economic-rational model of man (Davis et al., 1997) and underscores collective behavior and goal convergence. In this perspective, the staff and senior management of public sector organizations are believed to act in the best interest of their principals (Davis et al., 1997; Rogers & Whetten, 1982) and focus on goal alignment, absent of any tangible rewards (Schillemans, 2013; Van Slyke, 2007). The stewards are motivated intrinsically, by achievement and affiliation (Davis et al., 1997). As public servants are genuinely motivated by public service and stakeholder interest, their political and administrative principals can trust them to act accordingly to their objectives (Davis et al., 1997; Schillemans, 2013; Van Slyke, 2007). Moreover, by focusing primarily on the interests of society and users, organizations and their managers are more attuned to problems arising from ill-coordinated policies, like overlap, lacunae, and non-integrated service delivery, and the collective costs they carry.

Organizations do not need strong controls from their principals to collaborate and adapt to cross-cutting objectives because of their inherent motivation to contribute to and mutual trust in such initiatives (Davis et al., 1997). In fact, according to stewardship theory, intensive, detailed, and 'hard' controls from principals that 'force' their 'stewards' to pursue certain objectives will have counterproductive effects, as it signals to the 'steward' that the principal does not trust him, and he will be inclined to reciprocate this behavior with distrust and loss of intrinsic motivation (Argyris, 1964; Davis et al., 1997). As 'stewards' mainly respond to reputational incentives, too much emphasis on external incentives, like those related to performance, will not yield the expected effects. Rather, they will push the 'steward' towards self-interest. The room that organizations have to maneuver and to align themselves with the collective goal under a model of loose coupling implies trust, which fits the stewardship perspective.

The hypothesis on the basis of the stewardship perspective is that:

- H4b. Organizations under loosely coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly

In this optimistic perspective, the orientation, as well as the potential, of public sector organizations to internally adapt to cross-cutting objectives is even stronger under specific structural, task-related, and cultural conditions, especially when close to users, their services, and society, and when granted the autonomy and flexibility to direct resources and efforts of

their organization towards cross-cutting objectives. The next section will develop alternative hypotheses about the influence of the organizational characteristics on the basis of these two competing perspectives.

2.5.4. INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

On the basis of the coordination literature, we choose three organizational characteristics that cogently explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policies: autonomy, size, and policy task. We expect that these organizational characteristics can explain what type of organizations adapt more strongly to new cross-cutting policy objectives.

2.5.4.1. Autonomy

An important structural factor that explains variance in organizational adaptation to cross-cutting objectives is the autonomy, in terms of formal-legal distance from the center of government and competent ministers, of the organization. Basically, we can distinguish between departments and (semi)autonomous agencies of different types: departmental agencies, public law agencies with or without a governing board, and private law agencies (Van Thiel, 2012).

Departments and agencies differ in terms of variety of purposes and extent of autonomy. Departments are usually multipurpose entities with broadly defined scopes and are composed of subunits, which focus on different objectives and policy fields. Departments are under the full authority of their ministers and close to central government; principals can steer them to pursue defined objectives, which ministers can quite easily impose on departments as additional tasks. The relationship between the principal and department is hierarchical, and the power is unequal between the players (Schillemans, 2013). Many departments combine policy formulation and evaluation with elements of policy implementation. A diversity of functions and purposes increases the openness for coordination (Rogers & Whetten, 1982). Coordination and collaboration with other organizations implies the ability to move quickly and seize unexpected opportunities and, hence, requires involved organizations to shift resources across units of the organization and across activities or even share resources between organizations (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). This is exactly what departments can do. As departments are more multifunctional and comprised of different units, which focus on different objectives, there exists more possibility to shift resources from one objective to another and from one unit to another, if desired by executive politicians.

Compared to departments, (semi-)autonomous agencies are more focused and narrow (single-purpose) in their objectives (Van Thiel, 2012). This is even more the case for agencies with their own legal identities, vested in either public or private law. Their narrow

objectives revolve around enacting statutes that grant these agencies the legal basis for their existence, making it harder to assume extra objectives or new tasks not aligned directly with their statutory objectives. Moreover, these agencies are harder to control and steer, as their enacting statute restricts the modes of governmental intervention to those specifically mentioned in the statutes. Such legal status gives them formal autonomy, which shields them from ministerial interference and complicates steering and control (Pollitt, Talbot, Caulfield, & Smullen, 2004; Van Thiel, 2012). This is the case for coordination of vertical objectives but even more so for coordination of cross-cutting objectives. Formal autonomy grants the organization more leeway to define its own preferences and enact them without interference from above.

In sum, argued from the *agency model*, our basis argument is that *organizations* formally-legally closer to government will more easily engage themselves in cross-cutting objectives, because of the vertical accountability relationship. Independent agencies, which are formally-legally distant and have equal power in relation to their principals, are likely to develop agency behavior (Davis et al., 1997, p. 36).

The *stewardship model* underscores the importance of autonomy and discretion for collective goals to blossom. Stewards need room to maneuver, and control would be counterproductive (Davis et al., 1997). Even if the stewards' goals and that of the principal are not aligned "*the steward places higher value on cooperation than affection*" (Davis et al., 1997, p. 24). If, following from the stewardship perspective, autonomy is important for collective goals, we expect that formally-legally distant agencies adapt themselves more strongly to cross-cutting policy objectives.

The hypotheses for the influence of formal-legal distance and autonomy on the basis of these perspectives:

- *Agency perspective*: organizations which are formally-legally close from government, and which have relatively low levels of managerial autonomy, will make greater efforts, in terms of organizational adaptation, to achieve cross-cutting objectives.
- *Stewardship perspective*: organizations which are formally-legally further from central government, and which have relatively high levels of managerial autonomy, will make greater efforts, in terms of organizational adaptation, to achieve cross-cutting objectives.

2.5.4.2. Size

Argued from the agency model, and according to Pollitt et al (2004) and other researchers, the size of the organization (expressed in full time employees, and thus budget)

indicates importance in the eyes of the politicians. Larger organizations also pose greater risks to politicians, and they increase the amount of information asymmetries. Managers in large organizations are assumed to have more “discretionary” power (Jensen & Meckling, 1976, p. 330), which constrains the influence a minister has on the organization (Lægreid & Verhoest, 2010). The larger the organization, the lower the relative control capacity of the parent ministry or minister (Binderkrantz & Christensen, 2009, pp. 270–272). According to Olson (1971, p. 48), there are a few reasons why large organizations behave like agents. First, the larger the group, the smaller the fraction it will gain from achieving a collective good. Second, a large organization is less flexible and will have to bear more costs to align itself. Therefore, the hypothesis is that larger organizations will do less efforts in terms of organizational adaptation.

Stewards are in favor of full participation in the development of goals and achievement of envisioned outcome (Schillemans, 2013). Organizations with a smaller size are more likely to behave as stewards. Their “enormous energy and commitment” are more obvious, because they are for their existence and legitimacy dependent on successful collaborations (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 327). However, the ‘costs’ that they experience during the collaboration-process can be relatively high, compared to larger agencies (Provan & Milward, 2001, p. 420). As stewards are in favor of collective goals, they will tend to prioritize cross-cutting policy objectives. However, they need room for implementation and alignment with general targets. Even if the goal does not fit to the organizational goal, stewards try to align with congruent interests. A smaller size means more room to maneuver and flexibility to align with the collective goal.

The hypotheses on the basis of these perspectives:

- *Agency perspective*: Organizations which are larger in size will make less effort, in terms of organizational adaptation, to achieve cross-cutting objectives.
- *Stewardship perspective*: Organizations which are smaller in size will make more effort, in terms of organizational adaptation, to achieve cross-cutting objectives.

2.5.4.3. Primary organizational task

The task portfolio of an organization defines its technical environment, which, functionally and institutionally, determines behavior and role definition of individuals in organizations (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). Basically, in terms of tasks of public sector organizations, we can distinguish between policy *development* (coordination and evaluation) and policy *implementation* (general public service delivery, regulation, and exercising other kinds of public authority).

One may argue that coordination at the level of ‘text’, vision, i.e. policy development, is easier for the involved organization, compared to coordination of ‘actions’, i.e. policy implementation and service delivery. For organizations involved in policy development, coordinating policy formulation stages mainly means conversing with other actors in order to add their preferences to policy documents. Policy implementing agencies need to change procedures when coordinating their actions and coordination regarding policy implementation (like delivering seamless services, fully integrated with the services of other organizations). This affects their way of working, is more costly, in terms of resources and efforts, and has more impact on other organizational priorities. Agencies with policy implementation tasks will know more about the effects of policies and service delivery on users and society, as they remain in closer contact with them (Bekkers et al., 2013). Hence, in case ill-coordinated policies cause lacunae, overlaps, or contradicting signals to society, or when non-integrated service delivery causes costs, frictions, and frustrations within society, policy implementing agencies will most likely be better informed about these problems and their causes compared to organizations mainly involved in policy development.

Following the agency perspective, we expect that organizations with policy development tasks will make greater efforts to integrate cross-cutting policy objectives. Policy development often happens in departments where direct forms of monitoring and intervention are possible to overcome the worries of the principal (Schillemans, 2013). As principals worry about the (ab)use of the discretionary space, they can intervene with much easier with the processes of a policy development organization, compared to a policy implementing organization.

The stewardship perspective indicates the opposite, however, as organizations with policy implementation and service delivery will make greater efforts in terms of organizational adaptation to achieve cross-cutting objectives. Predicting outcomes of policy implementation is often problematic (Schillemans, 2013), but, because stewards, like policy implementing agencies, are focused on societal outcomes and therefore ‘the collective’, we expect that they will make greater efforts.

The hypotheses on the basis of these perspectives:

- *Agency perspective*; organizations tasked mainly with policy development will make greater efforts, in terms of organizational adaptation, to achieve cross-cutting objectives.
- *Stewardship perspective*; organizations tasked mainly with policy implementation and service delivery will make greater efforts, in terms of organizational adaptation, to achieve cross-cutting objectives

2.5.4.4. Combination of organizational characteristics

Abovementioned characteristics will never appear as a single condition. *Organizations are sets of different characteristics*. The hypotheses guiding RQ 4 are therefore configurations (which also fits FsQCA – explained in chapter 3 – methodology).

The combined hypotheses on the basis of these perspectives:

- *H5a. Agency perspective:* if organizations are close to the center of government (i.e. have low autonomy), of a large size and have a policy development task this will lead to high adaptation.
- *H5b. Stewardship perspective;* if organizations are further away from the center of government, of a smaller size, and have a policy implementation task this will lead to high adaptation.

Research question five (RQ 5) asks: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?* The hypothesis is that the coordination arrangement in interaction with the structure of organizations will lead to either higher or lower organizational adaptation. The combined hypotheses on the basis of these perspectives:

- *H6a. Agency perspective:* Being under tightly coupled coordination arrangements in combination with low autonomy, a large size and policy development as main task lead to high adaptation.
- *H6b. Stewardship perspective:* Being under loosely coupled coordination arrangements in combination with high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task lead to high adaptation.

2.6. HYPOTHESES TO STUDY ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

As explained in detail, this thesis aims to combine the concepts coordination and organizational adaptation. The expectation is, that by the end of this thesis, we can say whether 1) the organizational adaptation process can be better explained either with the agency or the stewardship perspective on organizations, or 2) that both perspectives are complementary. Moreover, another expectation is that we can say something about how the coordination arrangement interacts with the organizational characteristics to explain extent of organizational adaptation. Table 11 summarizes the three competing hypotheses to study organizational adaptation, based on the agency – and stewardship perspective.

TABLE 11: HYPOTHESES ON THE BASIS OF AGENCY- AND STEWARDSHIP PERSPECTIVE

Research question	Concept	Agency perspective	Stewardship perspective
RQ 3	Coordination arrangement	H4a: Organizations under tightly coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly	H4b: Organizations under loosely coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly
RQ 4	Organizational characteristics	H5a: low autonomy, a large size and policy development as main task lead to high adaptation	H5b: high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task lead to high adaptation
RQ 5	Interaction of organizational characteristics and coordination arrangement	H6a: Being under tightly coupled coordination arrangements in combination with low autonomy, a large size and policy development as main task lead to high adaptation	H6b: Being under loosely coupled coordination arrangements in combination with high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task lead to high adaptation

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter reviews the methodological design of the thesis. The research puzzle which this dissertation tries to answer is: *what explains organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?* Coordination and organizational adaptation (or implementation) have been mainly studied using thick descriptions on the basis of single case studies, which often came to pessimistic conclusions about the effectiveness of policy (Alexander, 1995; Sabatier, 1986). According to Alexander (1993), these studies were conducted in a rather ‘top-down school’ manner. The later research generation, however, adopted a more comparative approach, and determined characteristics that can explain variation in adaptation success (Sabatier, 1986, p. 21). Studies linking the characteristics of organizations and coordination arrangements from a comparative perspective remain necessary for more insight into the process between coordination and subsequent adaptation.

This thesis will address which factors explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives. The design of the thesis took its particular form through three different elements: the research puzzle, the theoretical framework, and previous studies about coordination.

The current chapter is divided into four parts:

1. The research questions.
2. *Part 1*: explains which policy issue characteristics ground the selection of cross-cutting policy objectives, and how coordination arrangements were studied.
3. *Part 2*: explains how organizational adaptation was studied, and which organizations were selected for this process.
4. The last section of this chapter addresses the rigorousness of the methodological design, as well as the challenges and concerns encountered during this study.

3.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this thesis is:

What explains organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?

To answer this question, the thesis will study two parts: the coordination arrangement deployed for specific cross-cutting policy objectives and the organizational adaptation to them.

In part 1, the coordination arrangement deployed in the specific cross-cutting policy objective is studied, and it expects that policy-specific characteristics explain the type of coordination deployed (either loosely or tightly coupled). To study the first part, the thesis presents the following research questions:

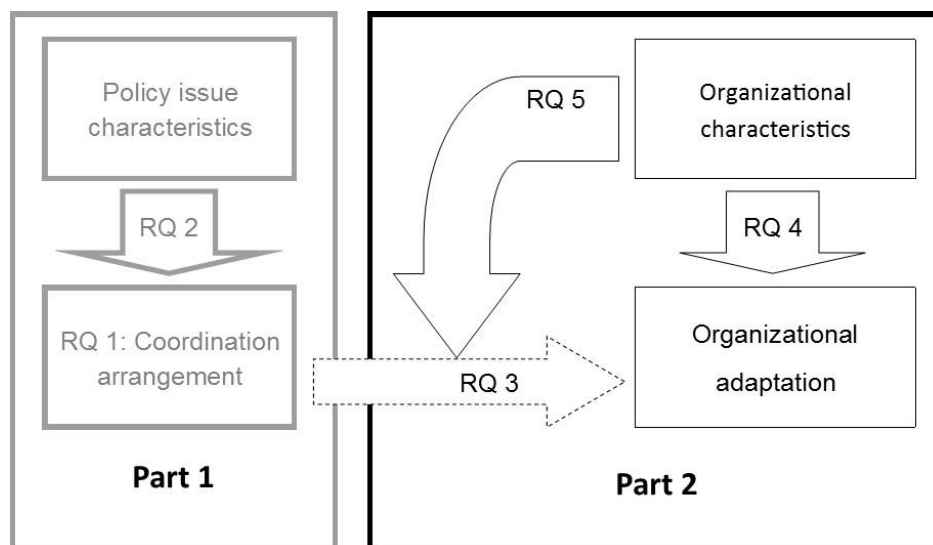
- RQ 1: *How does the Flemish government organize the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies?*
- RQ 2: *What policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting policies?*

Part 2 of this thesis studies organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives. On the basis of the literature, hypotheses were formulated about which perspective and which organizational characteristics can explain this process. To study the second part, the thesis presents the following research questions:

- RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 4: *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 5: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

Figure 4 provides an overview of all the research questions and layers.

FIGURE 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND –QUESTIONS

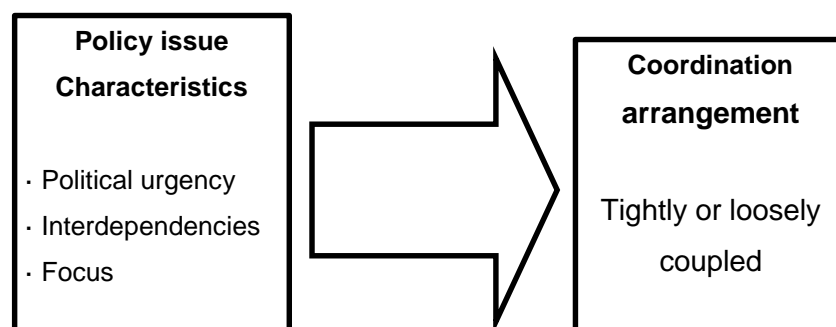


3.2. PART 1: COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

In this thesis, the collection of instruments and mechanisms deployed to steer a cross-cutting policy objective or program is called a coordination arrangement. Based on its characteristics, an assessment can be made about whether the arrangement is either tightly or loosely coupled. Following the research design, the first research question attempts to highlight the actors, instruments, and mechanisms deployed to coordinate the three cross-cutting policies under study. Subsequently, we determine why the coordination arrangement gets its particular form.

Authors (Alexander, 1995; Peters, 1998; Turnpenny et al., 2009) suggest that the 'character' of the policy issue provides an indication for the appropriate means to coordinate a policy issue. As addressed in the theoretical chapter, the expectancy is that policy issue characteristics—political urgency, interdependencies, and focus—determine the form of the arrangement. These hypotheses were built on previous research about policy coordination. Such an approach is called a y-centered research design (Haverland & Blatter, 2012). Y-centered research (see Figure 5) starts with a few theory-based assumptions about the influence of a specific configuration of independent variables (in this case, the policy issue characteristics) on the dependent variable of the coordination arrangement. The assumption in this kind of research design is that a *“plurality of factors work together to produce the outcome of interest”* (Haverland & Blatter, 2012). To reach valid conclusions in Y-centered research, the cases must have strong differences with respect to these selected characteristics, but remain as similar as possible in other respects. Lijphart (1971, p. 159) calls this a most-similar-different-outcome (MSDO) systems design: *“focusing the analysis on comparable cases (i.e., cases that are similar in a large number of important characteristics, but dissimilar with regard to the variables between which a relationship is hypothesized)”*. The following paragraphs explain the chosen cases and how they differ.

FIGURE 5: PART 1: Y CENTERED RESEARCH – CHARACTERISTICS OF COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS



3.2.1. PART 1: POLICY ISSUE CASE SELECTION

The selection of cross-cutting policy objectives was based on issue characteristics found, in the coordination literature, influential on the design of the coordination arrangements: (1.) political urgency, (2.) interdependence, and (3.) focus. The hypotheses in the theoretical framework clearly state the expected influence of these policy issue characteristics on the coordination arrangements. Table 12 shows which cross-cutting policies were chosen to study the hypotheses. Three different cases were selected: two opposite cases and a mixed case, in terms of the policy issue characteristics. On one hand, these policy issues do differ strongly on the abovementioned factors. On the other hand, however, these cases are similar: first and foremost, all involve many actors and consultation processes (e.g. deliberations with sectors, unions, experts etc.). Secondly, they belong, in terms of competencies, fully to the Flemish government. Thirdly, they began at least 10 years ago. Fourthly, these issues received policy (coordination) attention during the government period under the remit of Minister-President Kris Peeters. Underneath, the cases are described shortly, to clarify the case selection. Chapter four studies the cases in detail.

TABLE 12: CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVE SELECTION AND HYPOTHESES

	Austerity measures	Administrative simplification	Integrated Youth Care
Political urgency	H1a. High	Moderate	H1b. Low
Interdependence	H2a. Pooled	Mixed	H2b. Reciprocal
Focus	H3a. Internal	Mixed	H3b. External
Hypotheses	Tightly coupled	Mixed	Loosely coupled

3.2.1.1. Austerity measures

Austerity measures are politically urgent, must be reached by each organizations individually (pooled interdependent), and focused on internal operations (O'Toole Jr. & Montjoy, 1984). After a number of minor, initial savings, the Flemish government planned, in the autumn of 2011, to save 60 million euros on staff-related budget and 6% on staff members in three years. The staff-related budgets were skimmed from the annual organizational budgets in order to achieve this objective. The effort required of the organizations, in this timeframe, makes the time-horizon to achieve the goals of this policy issue short. Moreover, because politicians monitor, coordinate, and evaluate the progress closely (every three months), this policy issue is also politically urgent. The organizations are pooled interdependent, and the goal must be reached by each organization individually—i.e., across-the-board cuts. The focus of the austerity measures is internal, on staff-related budgets, and staff members *within* the Flemish government. While the 'core' austerity

measures began in 2011, the first austerity initiatives were already launched a few years before the inauguration of the government in 2009.

3.2.1.2. Administrative simplification

The Flemish government has two related but separate goals to enact administrative simplification:

1. ex-ante quality of new regulation, and
2. ex-post administrative simplification of existing regulation.

These concepts are interrelated: the better the ex-ante control of quality, the less administrative simplification needed afterwards. On one hand, the ex-ante deregulation goal is partially imposed, through the use of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). The ex-post goal, on the other hand, is fully voluntary. The administrative simplification objectives are moderate to low with respect to political urgency, and use inter-organizational networks (reciprocal interdependent, O'Toole et al., 1984) as well as individual input (pooled interdependent, O'Toole et al., 1984) to arrive at policy coherence. Although less bureaucracy affects citizens and companies, the policy issue remains, mainly, focused on internal operations. The 'program' began in September 2001 with the launch of the 'Knowledge Centre for Regulatory Management'.

3.2.1.3. Integrated Youth Care

Integrated Youth Care, a program to coordinate seamless services (external focus) in the youth health care was initiated because many actors reported gaps in the system, leaving youth who urgently needed an integrated approach 'slip through the health care net'. The program, which aims to create standardized and proper care chains, pushes actors to collaborate on both the administrative and operational, service-delivery levels. The 'policy lines', envisioned to separate different 'types of problems', so that each 'type of client' is channeled to the right service delivery chain, makes the organizations reciprocal interdependent. Although the administration felt the urgency, there was low political attention for the issue up to 2014—partially explained by frequent ministerial turnover. The earliest developments can be traced back to the parliamentary motion youth welfare ("motie bijzondere jeugdzorg") in 1998. That motion was the impetus for the new government, in 1998, to launch a working group, a committee, where basically all sectors, both administrations and political representatives, were present. In 2004, the first decree was approved by the government.

3.2.2. PART 1: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection and analysis are based on the premise that how the coordination arrangement was *de jure* framed and designed (Sorensen, 2006) could deviate from the *de facto* coordination processes. Besides the *de jure* description of the instruments, based on official decrees and reports, interviews with key respondents, political and administrative champions² clarify the *de facto* deployment of the coordination arrangement.

3.2.2.1. Data collection

Various official (e.g. the decree, reports) and informal documents (e.g. position papers, notes) were collected and analyzed to map the coordination actors, instruments, and arrangements. All 'coordination-actions' in the period from 2009 to early 2014 were taken into account. Moreover, interviews were conducted to validate the information stemming from the official documents. In Annex 4, an overview of all the interviews is provided. The political champion was often the representative of the ministerial cabinet³ of the competent minister. The external expert was often someone from an advisory board or a representative of an umbrella association.

3.2.2.2. Data analysis

The analysis of the coordination arrangements uses the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (Ostrom, 2005, see chapter two) to determine the coordination mode or hybrid form. This is based on the eight elements mentioned in theoretical framework (see also: Annex 1). With this framework the actors and coordination instruments will be classified and assessed to analyze whether the arrangement is loosely or tightly coupled. If the arrangement is fully tightly coupled all the elements receive a score of one, like in the upper radar-graph in Graph 1. The second radar-graph shows a loosely coupled arrangement, in which all the elements of the IAD-framework received a score of four.

² 'Champion' refers to a visible, powerful, and prestigious civil servant who organizes or boosts the translation and the dynamics (Agranoff, 2006).

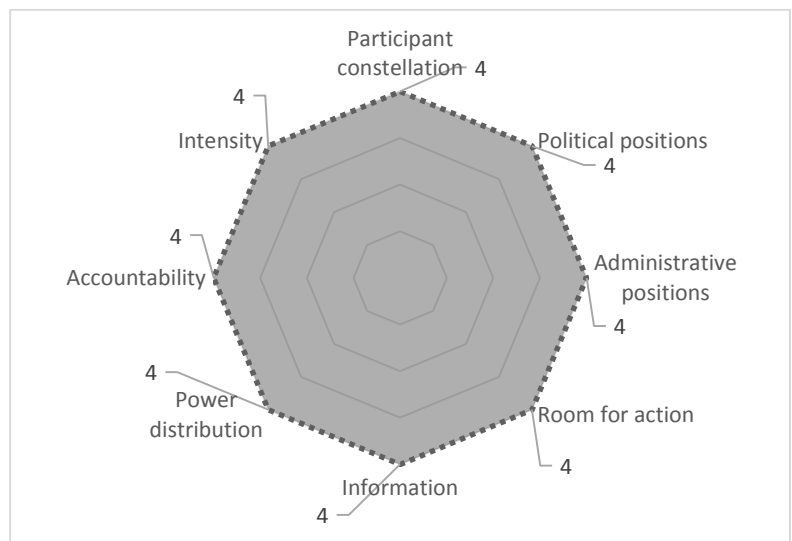
³ A ministerial cabinet comprises staff or personal advisors hired when a minister takes office. They are not part of the administrative hierarchy. They assist the minister in identifying policy problems, outlining policy, and in everyday decision-making. They are spoils in that they come and go with their minister.

GRAPH 1: IDEAL TYPE TIGHTLY COUPLED AND LOOSELY COUPLED ARRANGEMENTS

Tightly coupled arrangements



Loosely coupled arrangements



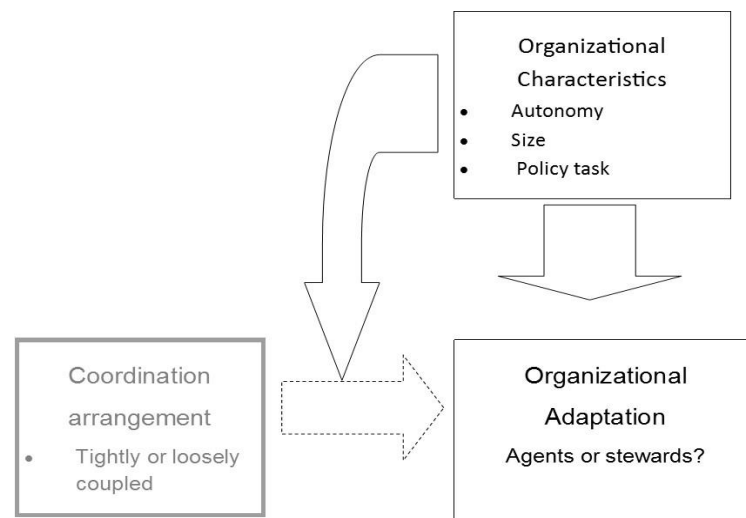
3.3. PART 2: ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

After mapping the coordination arrangement in every policy issue, organizational adaptation to the cross-cutting policy objectives is studied. Organizational adaptation is the process in which organizations cope and weigh environmental demands and the adaptation required to comply with them (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 18). Here, the focus lays on the adaptation of cross-cutting policy objectives to organizational-specific structures (i.e. goals, monitoring systems, financial resources, appointment of responsible staff members). Following the research design, the second part of the thesis is guided by three questions:

- RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 4: *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 5: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

As addressed in the theoretical chapter, the agency and stewardship perspectives present competing perspectives on organizational adaptation. Also discussed in the theoretical chapter is the expectancy that organizational characteristics—size, autonomy, and policy task—determine to what extent organizations adapt to a cross-cutting policy objective. Like the study of the coordination arrangements, this part uses a y-centered design (see Figure 6), which compares cases via meaningful systemic differences. Therefore, similar organizations—but ones that differ on the independent aspects under study—are selected to study organizational adaptation.

FIGURE 6: PART 2: Y CENTERED RESEARCH – CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIZATIONS



3.3.1. PART 2: ORGANIZATION CASE-SELECTION

The empirical chapters on organizational adaptation will describe ten organizations, involved in the three cross-cutting policies. These ten organizations are specifically chosen because they represent ‘a specific configuration’ of organizational characteristics (see Table 13). Based on the theoretical framework, this thesis proposes that autonomy, size, and policy

task explain organizational adaptation. To reach valid conclusions, it chooses a MSDO design.

By selecting only organizations of two ministries, the diversity remains slightly limited. The organizations were specifically selected from the ministries of Social protection and Health and Environmental Protection⁴. In terms of staff, these ministries are the second and third largest (of thirteen ministries in total), so they are comparable in size. In terms of budget, these sectors are large, and, therefore, often politically salient. The ministers have many organizations and sectors under their remit. In terms of ministerial steering, the Environmental Protection ministry had two ministers during 2009-2014, Joke Schauvliege for Environment and Nature, and Freya Van den Bossche for Energy. The Social protection and Health ministry had only one, Jo van Deurzen. These ministries were also chosen because they include all the different types of organizations, necessary for the case-selection. The same agencies and departments were selected to assess the organizational adaptation to all three policy issues. By working this way, the organizational differences across the three cross-cutting policy cases remain the same. This has a major advantage: factors are constant and, therefore, the mechanisms that operate among the organizational characteristics, coordination arrangement, and organizational adaptation can be studied more clearly.

The organizations do differ, however, in their organizational characteristics of autonomy, size, and policy task (see for an overview Table 13). The organizations were selected as follows:

Autonomy

The organization selection, in terms of autonomy, is based on the legal structural type of the organization (Van Thiel, 2012). Three different types of organizations have been included, and ranked below in order of increasing level of formal autonomy:

1. Departments (two included): Units operating under direct supervision of ministers and do not have their own legal identities.
2. Departmental agencies (four included): Units without legal identities but with extended forms of managerial autonomy.
3. Semi-autonomous agencies:
 - public law agencies under direct ministerial authority (three included) with legal identities.
 - public law agencies with governing boards (one included).

⁴ Classification of the OECD: <http://www.oecd.org/gov/48250728.pdf>

Size

In terms of size, both large (>350 full time employees) and small organizations (<350 full time employees), in terms of staff were selected. The selection was based on the average size, 350 full time employees, of a Flemish government organization. Following this classification, five organizations are considered large and five small.

Policy task

Both organizations with a policy development task (two included), as well organizations with a policy implementation task (eight included) were selected.

TABLE 13: ORGANIZATION SELECTION

Organization	Size	Autonomy	Policy task
1	Large	Low	Implementation
2	Small		Implementation
3	Large		Development
4	Large	High	Implementation
5	Small		Implementation
6	Small	Low	Development
7	Small		Implementation
8	Small	High	Implementation
9	Large		Implementation
10	Large	Low	Implementation

3.3.2. PART 2: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Like Part 1, the data collection and analysis of organizational adaptation assume that how organizations *de jure* frame and design the organizational adaptation (Sorensen, 2006) could be different from the *de facto* management and participation. In the ten organizations (see Table 14) under study, both the *de jure* (documents) as well as the *de facto* situation (interviews) are studied in detail.

3.3.2.1. Document collection and analysis

In order to better understand *de jure* organizational adaptation, a content analysis of different organizational documents was conducted.

Data collection

Data collection occurred with the multi-annual performance agreement (policy plans with a five year term), the business plans (yearly translation of the agreement) and lastly, the annual reports.

We collected from each organization:

1. the multi-annual performance agreements from 2007-2010 and 2011-2015

2. the annual business plans from 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012
3. the annual reports from 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012

For more explanation about these instruments, see Annex 2. These documents help guarantee sound planning, negotiation, follow up, and evaluation at the level of the single agency. Each organization can have, in total, ten documents, but some do not use certain documents, especially not until 2010 (see for an overview Table 14). To summarize, the collection amounted to 86 documents. Nvivo 10 was used to conduct word queries (see Annex 3). We ended up with many references to the cross-cutting policy objectives, which were then scanned for their contextual content to determine if they really concerned the policy issue under study. After this selection, we ended up with 136 references to the austerity measures, 238 to administrative simplification, and 210 to Integrated Youth Care⁵.

TABLE 14: DOCUMENTS PER ORGANIZATION

Organization	Size	Autonomy	Policy task	# of documents
1	Large	Low	Implementation	10
2	Small		Implementation	10
3	Large		Development	6
4	Large	High	Implementation	10
5	Small		Implementation	10
6	Small	Low	Development	7
7	Small		Implementation	6
8	Small	High	Implementation	8
9	Large		Implementation	10
10	Large	Low	Implementation	9

Data analysis

The documents were studied to assess to which extent organizations address the policy issue in terms of structural organizational adaptation:

1. *Aligning goals*: The quality of the formulated goals, measured by the extent to which they are SMART
 - *Specific* – the goal explains and targets an explicit area.
 - *Measurable* – the goal quantifies an indicator or norm to which the organization can be held accountable.
 - *Achievable* – the goal is well defined and clear enough to be achieved.
 - *Realistic* – the goal states what results can realistically be achieved given available resources.

⁵ An overview (in Dutch) can be obtained from the researcher, mail to: astrid.molenveld@uantwerpen.be

- *Timely* – the goal specifies when and with which paths the result(s) can be achieved.
2. *Monitoring*
 - Is there a monitoring tool?
 3. *Allocating financial resources*
 - Are the goals translated into budget plans?
 4. *Appointment of a responsible person*
 - Is there a 'champion' (or 'champions') appointed?

An organization can reach a score between zero and one (a mean was taken across the documents) per element of structural adaptation, on the basis of the extent to which an organization mentions it. In total, the score for *de jure* adaptation of the cross-cutting policy objectives to organizational structures can reach a score of four, if the organization mentioned all the elements of structural adaptation fully.

The *de facto* adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives, however, can deviate significantly. The documents do not reveal much about the perspectives of the involved organizations, or *how* they adapt to the cross-cutting policies (on not) in their organizational planning and reporting documents, and to what extent the coordination arrangement deployed affects this. Still, as these documents remain the basis for the evaluation of staff by the senior management, and organizations by the responsible minister, we argue that they will match, to a large extent, the actual *ex-ante planning*. Studies of organizational documents to assess activity or references to specific goals have been done in a similar way by other authors as well (mentioned in Christensen, Lægreid, Roness, & Røvik, 2007, p. 82).

3.3.2.2. Q-methodology (interviews)

In order to validate and deepen the understanding of the organizational adaptation process, interviews were conducted, mainly to develop insight with regards to 'linking pins' (Schout & Jordan, 2008). Q-methodology studies individual points-of-view. This method, developed by William Stephenson (1902-1989), has been applied in both clinical settings for assessing individuals, as well as in research settings to examine how people think about a certain issue (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). Q-methodology is not particularly widespread in Public Administration and Management, but there have been a few applications (e.g. Brewer, Selden, & Facer II, 2000; Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993; Exel, Graaf, & Brouwer, 2007; Jeffares & Skelcher, 2011; Sullivan & Williams, 2012; van Eijk & Steen, 2013; Willis & Jeffares, 2012). Many of the applications are geared towards larger groups of respondents, but, in its first use

Q-methodology, was applied to study viewpoints of a single individual (Brown, 1993; Stenner, Watts, & Worrell, 2007). This study focuses on a larger group.

Data collection

Q-methodology works with a small non-representative sample and, therefore, conclusions are limited to those who participated. Although respondents should not be chosen to the extent in which they are representative for the whole population, the respondents are consciously selected. From each of the ten case organizations one 'linking pin', responsible for a policy issue under study, was chosen. These are the representatives of the organization, the ones who have to 'adapt' and implement the cross-cutting policy objectives within the organization. The 'linking pins' (Schout & Jordan, 2008) are the first to confront the new cross-cutting demands and, therefore, are of particular relevance to the policy issue (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

Twenty-nine interviews were conducted, each featuring one linking pin from an organization. The response rate was 100% (see Table 15, the numbers refer to individual respondents)⁶. Many Q-sort studies have around 30-50 respondents, and this is considered adequate. The policy area Environmental Protection is not active in Integrated Youth Care. For Integrated Youth Care, we picked two respondents per organization from the five organizations involved. One organization had only one organizational linking pin appointed for Integrated Youth Care.

TABLE 15: RESPONDENT-SELECTION

	Org 1	Org 2	Org 3	Org 4	Org 5	Org 6	Org 7	Org 8	Org 9	Org 10	Total
Austerity measures	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	10
Administrative simplification	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	#16	#17	#18	#19	#20	10
Integrated Youth care	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	#21 & #22	#23	#24 & #25	#26 & #27	#28 & #29	9
Total	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	29

Data analysis

Q-methodology, in comparison to other (statistical) methods, attempts to find patterns across respondents, which, in turn, are used to find patterns across items (Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993, p. 50). Respondents are asked to rank statements in relation to other statements into a quasi-normal distribution (see for example Annex 6) based on preference. As a researcher, you develop a comprehensive view of a respondent's perception (Brewer et

⁶ The numbers do not refer to the numbers given to the respondents in Annex 4: Interviews, because anonymity was granted to the interviewees

al., 2000). Factor analyses are used to identify clusters of respondents who have sorted the statements in a similar way. Furthermore, q-methodology gives the researcher an overview of the different discourses on the topic studied. Q-methodology makes use of two sets of samples: a q-sample and a p-sample. The q of the q-sample refers to *question*. The p of p-sample refers to *person*.

Q-methodology first defines questions. 'Representative' in q-methodology relates to the representativeness of the q-sample for the whole debate on a topic and not to the respondents-sample. As it is important that statements represent existing opinions and arguments from relevant actors (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005, p. 4), the interviews about the coordination arrangement with the champions of the three cross-cutting policy objectives were used. Six extra interviews were done to retrieve more statements about how organizations adapt the cross-cutting objectives into their own objectives and to better understand the organizational adaptation 'debate'. These six respondents had nothing to do with the three cross-cutting policy objectives under study; they were selected to ensure that the 'debate' is representative for other policy issues as well. For an overview of all the conducted interviews, see Annex 4.

The interviews were transcribed and coded, and 615 quotes were selected. Out of the total of 615 selected statements, a subset of twenty-four statements was compiled for the q-sort about organizational adaptation. Although this selection is of utmost importance, it is also fairly based on the impression of the researcher (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). To ensure the selection was done systematically, 'a discourse analysis matrix' was used (based on Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993) (see Annex 5). The matrix consists of substance elements (rows) and types of arguments (columns).

To come up with the q-sample (see Annex 5), statements were placed within each cell. Some statements were re-framed and re-written for clarity of meaning. The elements of Christensen and his colleagues (2007)—structure, culture, and myth—were used as substance elements. The second dimension (columns), based on argument types, includes designative, evaluative, and advocative arguments (based on Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993; van Eijk & Steen, 2014).

- *Designative arguments*; are about facts and quotations in which people state that something is likely, accurate, or true.
- *Evaluative arguments*; concern the worth of something that does or can exist. Under this argument, quotations with value judgments are clustered.
- *Advocative arguments*; concern whether or not something should exist. These arguments involve statements which advocate for a certain action and can be controversial.

The active, 'on-the-spot' involvement of respondents, who must sort through the statements, makes the data highly reliable. During the interview, the researcher can explicate the statements and method, and the respondent can explain her or his contemplations. The interview protocol can be found in Annex 7 (based on Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). The analysis of the q-sorts starts by correlating all types of participants, resulting in a 29 × 29 matrix, reflecting the correlations among viewpoints of the respondents in the p-set. Using the PQ Method 2.35, the correlation matrix was factor analyzed⁷ with a Centroid factor analysis, an exploratory factor analysis—used to uncover the underlying structure of large sets of variables—and applied a varimax rotation. This maximizes “the purity of saturation”—i.e., examining as many sorts under the number of factors extracted—and ensures that each sort has the highest degree of association with only one factor (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 52). We used the option of Horst 5.5 with iterative solutions for communalities instead of Brown's (1980) method, due to the latter's irregularities (Schmolck, 2015).

3.3.2.3. Qualitative comparative analysis to unravel patterns

The data on organizational adaptation, based on the analysis of the documents (*de jure*) and the information following from the q-sort interview (*de facto*) are combined in chapter five. This leads to four types, or levels, of adaptation:

- Low de jure x low de facto – Little plans x little action
- High de jure x low de facto – Huge plans x little action
- Low de jure x high de facto – Little plans x huge action
- High de jure x high de facto – Huge plans x huge action

A fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (FsQCA) is used to assess whether different organizational characteristics (and the coordination arrangement) can explain the extent of organizational adaptation. This method and approach allows for small n samples, and it is a method that analyzes combinations of conditions. This fits the research design of this thesis well. A particular condition may have a different result, depending on the combination of conditions surrounding it. In other words, FsQCA does not assume the uniformity of causal effects, as in statistics. Also contrary to statistics, this method is not oriented towards the formulation of a single causal model that fits the data best (Rihoux & Lobe, 2009). It permits the existence of several combinations or conditions, which can equally account for the outcome. Moreover, FsQCA assumes *asymmetric causality*: if the presence of a particular (combination of) condition(s) is relevant for high adaptation, then its absence is not

⁷ <http://schmolck.userweb.mwn.de/qmethod/downpqwin.htm> (Schmolck, 2015)

necessarily relevant for low adaptation. Thus, the results of the analysis are ‘configurations’ (Longest & Vaisey, 2008) that explain high and low adaptation. In this context, ‘configuration’, also called a ‘path’, refers to a combination of conditions that lead to high or low adaptation. For example:

High autonomy * (and) being a large organization (size) -> (leads to) high adaptation.

The calibration process remains a key precursor to retrieve these configurations. This involves the researcher assigning cases to ‘categories’ based on whether or not it belongs to a particular set. A set is a ‘bunch of things’, for example organizations with high autonomy. A department is ‘fully out of the set of organizations with high autonomy’ and, therefore, receives a 0 on the condition ‘high autonomy’. Most important in this process is the anchor point of 0,5. Cases with scores below the anchor point become cases without the particular condition, and those with a score above become cases with it. By systematically comparing the combinations of conditions, the researcher searches for certain patterns and redundant conditions. To unravel those patterns, FsQCA relies on Boolean mathematics.

FsQCA expresses causal relations in terms of necessity and sufficiency. A condition is necessary whenever it and the outcome are both present: $X \leftarrow Y$. In other words, if we see a certain outcome, the condition is in the path (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010). A sufficient configuration can be schematically explained as $X \rightarrow Y$, meaning that a certain condition or a combination of conditions leads to a certain outcome (i.e. high or low adaptation).

Two parameters are used to analyze the sufficient configurations: coverage and consistency. The higher a coverage score, the higher the percentage of cases that exhibit a given configuration and the outcome. The higher a consistency score, the higher the proportion of cases consistent with a certain outcome. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.80 for the analysis of sufficient conditions and at 0.90 for necessary conditions. Consistency values of 0.7 and higher are well suited for the analysis of sufficient conditions. This is in line with medium-sized N (30-60) QCA-applications (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010, 2012). FsQCA and its specifics will be further explained, step-by-step, in chapter 5.

3.4. METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES AND CONCERNS

Safeguarding the reliability of this research can be done by describing the research methods and procedures thoroughly while accounting for the challenges in methods and design (Haverland & Blatter, 2012; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994). During any study, and due to practical and methodological challenges, numerous events and decisions change the intended design. The following paragraphs describe these challenges and explain their solutions.

The abovementioned paragraphs showed that the data analysis is based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis: a mixed-method approach. Triangulation of methods prevents a common methods bias. Triangulation rests on the premise that, by combining methodologies to study the same phenomenon, the weaknesses of each single method will be compensated by the strengths of other methods (Jick, 1979). The data collection and the analysis is based on the premise that empirical material can demonstrate significant difference between: 1.) How something was envisioned, which we call the *de jure* situation, and 2.) how something works *de facto*, in practice. This is why I study both documents, as well as interviews, which provide the perspectives of respondents. These two data sources are combined in chapter five. This triangulation of the data from these approaches creates a rich insight into the coordination arrangement and the adaptation process.

Considering my own background and presumptions, I am most acquainted with the positivist approach to scientific studies. Therefore, I have assumptions about objectivity and 'retractable facts' and am more inclined to 'test' certain theories. These theories are often middle range theories that are not encompassing but rather limited in scope (Merton, 1957). Middle range theories are often highly iterative: supported by empirics and, vice versa, constructed with observed data and afterwards tested by empirics. Take the q-sort study for example. This study began with interviews on the topic; then, statements were extracted and tested among a new sample of respondents. This might limit external validity, because it starts with theorizing clearly defined elements of a certain study object. External validity is, on the other hand, strengthened by the selection of policy issues and organizations, allowing for theoretical generalization (Yin, 2014). This selection assures the internal validity of results, but also strengthens the representativeness of the results for other cases related to cross-cutting policy initiatives. I tried to remain as open as possible to elements that did not fit the research framework. For instance, the semi-structured interviews introduced new factors that can possibly influence the coordination arrangement and organizations (descriptive inference). Furthermore, the broad selection of respondents and cases may provide deeper insight than previously thought.

A study on a small scale ensures internal validity, because it is directed, specific, and systematic. The response of a 100% in both interview rounds (coordination arrangement and organizational adaptation) strengthens this validity. Because I granted anonymity, and coded rather than named organizations, many interviews were conducted and many documents shared. Internal validity, in this context, also refers to how well run the study was. All the documents and interviews were transcribed and coded; all other empirical data is retractable, and replication of this research is possible. Giving this account and using explicit, codified, and public methods is a best practice in scientific research and ensures reliability, both in terms of data generations and further testing of the conclusions under different

circumstances (King et al., 1994). Responsible champions vetted and approved the factual data in the description of the coordination arrangements. The interview material and perception data were presented at many public fora, where the results were discussed with civil servants of the Flemish government. Furthermore, many parts of the thesis have been presented on different occasions: research visits, conferences, workshops, etc.

4. COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

This chapter describes the coordination arrangements for cross-cutting policy objectives. Three cross-cutting policy objectives were selected for their characteristics: (1.) the austerity measures, (2.) administrative simplification, and (3.) Integrated Youth Care (see Table 16). The chapter aims to answer the first research question (RQ 1): *How does the Flemish government organize the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies?* Every cross-cutting policy objective will receive a short introduction. Subsequently, the coordination arrangement will be analyzed using Elinor Ostrom's IAD framework (2005, 2010 – see chapter 2 and Table 16). Scaling the elements on a 4-point 'scale' from (1), tightly, to (4), loosely coupled, helps us assess the type of coordination.

TABLE 16: ELEMENTS OF THE IAD FRAMEWORK

Participant constellation
Political positions
Administrative positions
Room for action
Information
Power distribution
Accountability
Intensity

The theoretical section concluded with specific hypotheses about which coordination arrangements we expect to find in the cross-cutting policy objectives, based on their policy issue characteristics. Table 17 provides an overview of the hypotheses and the cases. In the austerity measures, a tightly coupled coordination arrangement is expected, while, in Integrated Youth Care, a loosely coupled one. The administrative simplification objective features mixed policy issue characteristics; therefore, a hybrid coordination arrangement is expected. Comparing the empirical assessments of types of coordination used, with these hypotheses, is the aim of the last paragraph of each subsection. These attempt to answer the second research question (RQ 2): *What policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting policies?*

TABLE 17: CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVE SELECTION AND HYPOTHESES

	Austerity measures	Administrative Simplification	Integrated Youth Care
Political urgency	High	Moderate	Low
Interdependence	Pooled	Mixed	Reciprocal
Focus	Internal	Mixed	External
Expectation	Tightly coupled	Hybrid	Loosely coupled

4.1. AUSTERITY MEASURES⁸

The Flemish government works to address the major challenge of a more efficient and better service delivery, without increase of staff, as formulated in its coalition agreement of 2009-2014. In fact, the government wants to spend its budget on core tasks. During this period, it gradually introduced austerity measures, especially after 2011, (1) to reduce its workforce by 6,5% and (2) to realize a budget cut of 60 million euros on staff-related budgets in the budget years 2012-2014. The Flemish government is not the only government which is thoroughly reviewing its expenses; many European governments look for measures to bring public finances into balance. The Flemish government wants to shrink mostly through natural attrition—e.g. not renewing contracts, not replacing staff who will retire, etc.—and across-the-board-cuts. This places Flanders, in comparison with other European countries, within the group of countries with moderate savings targets (Kickert et al., 2013; Molenveld, Boon, & Verhoest, 2014). The coordination arrangement will be described in the following sections.

4.1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVE

Immediately after taking office in 2009, the Flemish government announced that the administrative apparatus would be cut by 5% of its operational costs, while there would be a 2,5% on staff-related budgets, by the end of 2014. In early 2011, this amount was further increased with an extra 1,5% cut. Moreover, organizations did not receive budgets to compensate 'seniority' (and rising labor costs) in their staffs, as happened previously. Additionally, a 10% cut in the budget allocated for communication and consultants was added to the measures. Shortly afterwards (spring 2011), the Flemish government announced that colleagues leaving in the coming years would be only partially replaced. April 2011 marked the beginning of the more severe reduction in staff, which had to be reduced by 5%, and budget. This affected *heads* instead of full-time equivalents (FTE), implying that it does not matter if a staff member works full or part time. Furthermore, a saving of 50 million euros on staff-related budget over the period 2012-2014 was imposed. At the time of the government budget planning in February 2012, the 5% cut became the 6% norm (i.e. 1700

⁸ Another version of this text has also been part of papers (see e.g. Molenveld et al., 2014; Molenveld & Verhoest, 2013)

fewer staff members in total). Also, the savings on staff-related budgets increased. By 2014, a decrease of 60 million euros had to be reached, instead of the earlier target of 50 million. Supplementary savings were announced by the Flemish government in November 2012. A *surplus* of 11,7 million was added to the existing 60 million euros cut from staff-related budgets. An extra staff reduction of up to 6,5% was introduced in 2013 after the government realized that the staff reduction had been already achieved one year before the deadline (June 2014). At the moment of writing (October 2015), the Flemish government has reduced its workforce by 7,5% or 2160 employees, 285 more than anticipated.

The Flemish parliament decided that they did not want to save in subsidized sectors, where the government gives major policy impulses, such as sheltered and social workshops, services and benefits for people with disabilities, child and youth care, and homecare and housing subsidies. From the case organizations in this thesis, organization ten is excluded from the austerity measures (see Table 18) and another (organization nine) is partially excluded.

TABLE 18: THE STAFF REDUCTION HAS DIFFERENT IMPACT ON DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS

Goal	
Organization 1	6 %
Organization 2	7 %
Organization 3	7 %
Organization 4	6 %
Organization 5	6 %
Organization 6	6 %
Organization 7	6 %
Organization 8	6 %
Organization 9	2 %
Organization 10	0 %

See the timeline below for an overview of the most important events.

- 2010: new government and introduction of the following measures:
 - o 2,5% cut on staff budgets and 5% on operating costs
 - o 20% cut on budget for communication and consultants
- 2011:
 - o Extra cut of 1,5% on staff budget
 - o Extra 10% cut on budget for communication and consultants
- 2011:
 - o April: 5% staff reduction.
 - o April: 50 million euro reduction of staff budget
- 2012:
 - o February: increase staff reduction to 6%, 1700 heads in total
 - o February: 60 million euro reduction of staff budget
- 2013:
 - o September: increase to 6,5% staff reduction

- November: 100 million euros (after September declaration); extra budget cut of 11,7 million euros
- 2014
 - 31 March: deadline for the savings on 'heads' and personnel related budgets

4.1.2. INSTRUMENTS OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The following paragraphs will describe the political and administrative champions, and structural and management instruments.

4.1.2.1. Political and administrative champions

Geert Bourgeois, the Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish government (at that time) is responsible for coordinating the austerity goals. He has the authoritative power to sanction organizations that do not reach their goals with, for example, a recruitment stop. The administrative champions of this dossier are from the Department of Public Governance (in Dutch: Bestuurszaken), under remit of Geert Bourgeois. The CAG (see Annex 2: Instruments of the Flemish Government) has a major role and is appointed as champion of the whole austerity project. The CAG is a horizontal forum which unites the CEOs of departments or agencies, who discuss managerial topics which go beyond the organizational level. It has thirteen members in total, one representative of each ministry. It is a major 'channeling forum' for information-delivery to ministers and to Flemish government organizations, and is tasked with developing a method to realize the austerity goals.

4.1.2.2. Structural Instruments

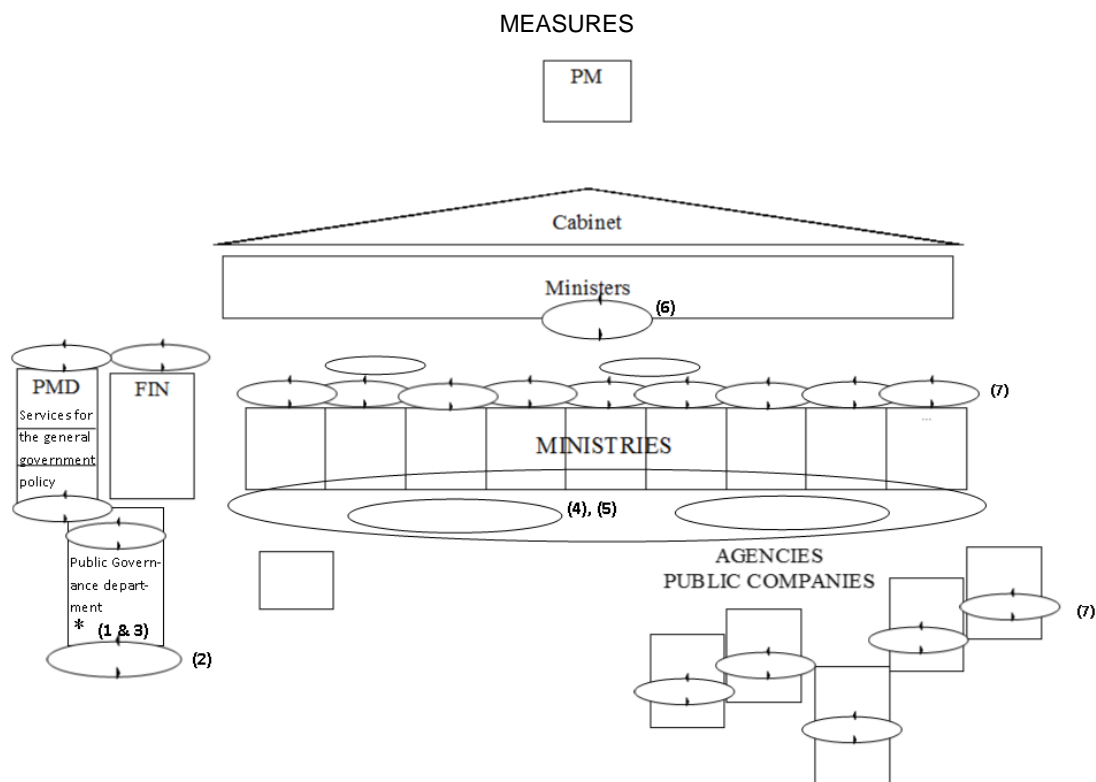
Geert Bourgeois had appointed the CAG to figure out a method to reduce the staff by 6% and achieve the 60 million euro budget cut. An ad-hoc working group, encompassing ten CEOs of departments and agencies, is established to do this. This group must design a method, without intervention from political actors. Eventually, this working group split Flemish governmental organizations into two groups: (1) organizations who previously had realized savings, and (2) those who still had to do so. Subsequently, the abovementioned groups divided the austerity measures among themselves. After these groups came to an agreement, the plan was written and then accepted by the CAG and the Flemish parliament. In the implementation phase, organizations can 're-allocate' the reduction of the number of staff intra-ministry, but not inter-ministry. As the CAG decided, the CEOs can decide autonomously where to replace staff. Concerning the staff-budget reduction, the CAG decided on a 'growth path' which saves up every year one third of the 60 million euros in

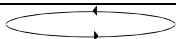
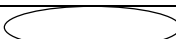

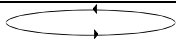
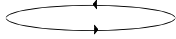
total. That is, in three consecutive fiscal years (2012-2014), 20 million was cut. A consensus within CAG about how much each ministry would contribute drove this decision.

4.1.2.3. Management instruments

The Department of Public Governance manages the measurement of the staff reduction, and the CAG delivers and validates figures and subsequently reports to the core ministers in a trimestral meeting between these ministers and the CAG (in Dutch: kern-CAG). The staff reduction figures are also reported half-yearly to the core-ministers and the whole Flemish government. In their performance agreements for the period 2011-2015, organizations were asked to record the number of employees, expressed as full-time equivalents (FTE). Furthermore, they had to clarify how to keep this amount equal or, preferably, lower in the coming years. The 6% and 60 million euro staff and budget reductions were, at that time, not yet enacted. Individual organizations were tasked with monitoring the results at least twice a year to determine if the targets were achieved. Figure 7 provides a schematic overview of all the agencies, departments, champions, and instruments involved in the austerity measures. This figure is solely intended to provide insight into the coordination structure and its instruments. It will not be further used in the analysis. The legend below the figure explains, number by number, which instruments and actors are shown in the figure.

FIGURE 7: OVERVIEW OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT DEPLOYED IN THE AUSTERITY MEASURES



Number	Figure	Explanation
(1)	*	Responsible minister – Vice-Minister-President – Department for Public Governance
(2)		Monitoring of the austerity measures
(3)	*	Two champions of the Public Governance Department
(4)		CAG
(5)		Ad-hoc working group of the CAG to come up with a method for the core austerity measures
(6)		Trimestral meeting between the competent ministers and the CAG
(7)		strategic and management agreements and business plans of the agencies and ministries/departments

4.1.3. ANALYSIS OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The following paragraphs will analyze thoroughly the coordination arrangement using the IAD framework. This framework examines the different aspects of the coordination arrangement: the participant constellation, the political and administrative positions, the room for action, the information available to the participant, the power distribution, accountability arrangements, and collaboration intensity. After this description, the analysis leads to the conclusion about whether the arrangement is either tight or loose.

4.1.3.1. Participant constellation

In the decision making process, horizontal linkages, which are more open and fluent, exist within the ad-hoc working group of the CAG. In this group, the CEOs develop the method to achieve the austerity goals. During the implementation phase, which followed shortly afterwards, the participant constellation is vertically oriented, with tight, restricted, ordered linkages between organizations. The reduction occurs within the organizations. If necessary, the policy council and the management committee (see Annex 2) —ministerial forums—decide upon ‘shifts’ in staff reduction numbers.

4.1.3.2. Political positions

Geert Bourgeois, the lead minister, coordinates the austerity measures. He bases his political position on a unilaterally coercive government directive with executive orders. This coercive strategy is clearly demonstrated by the authoritarian power that the responsible minister has: *“the minister said at that time, if we notice in the annual monitoring that an organization is not complying, and is also not likely to achieve the goal on 31/6/2014, other measures must been taken. End of discussion”* (respondent 19). In other words, the political position is tightly established in the austerity measures.

4.1.3.3. Administrative positions

The austerity goals are lead organization governed, by specific administrative champions per goal. The champions within the Department of Public Governance are responsible for the tally, as well as assistance and coaching, but do not have a hierarchical function or decision-power. There is no fully-fledged, separately-created formal organization. These administrative champions, simultaneously, have many roles: initiator, participant, and champion. Yet they must combine these with a 'police role', which often creates role conflicts: *"the purpose of the department of Public Governance is not to control or audit the organizations. Sometimes some people think so, but we are not an audit office"* (respondent 18). This may eventually delegitimize the champion and, sometimes, cause deadlock.

4.1.3.4. Room for action

To examine organizations' room for action, Ostrom (2005) analyzes mission statements. These statements can be formulated as rules, norms, strategies, and statements that convey their compellingness. The Flemish government's mission was first a norm—see the quote below. Along the way, when the number, amount, and percentage were set, the mission became a rule, because the minister introduced a sanction (see: political positions). The organizations have to comply, otherwise the political level takes other measures. The initial norm was for the staff reduction was:

"The organizations (attributes) engage themselves in relation to the relevant minister (deontics) to keep the number of employees, expressed in FTE constant, or preferable lower (aim), in comparison to the number of FTE in the organization at the beginning of the Flemish coalition agreement 2009-2014 (conditions).

4.1.3.5. Information

The austerity measures are coordinated via direct formal information channels. In the decision making phase, there are informal information-channels in the CAG workgroup. During this period, there are many possibilities to discuss and update the reduction method. In the implementation phase, the information is formal. Every organization receives standardized information: i.e., reach 6% staff reduction by means of natural attrition. Every organization has the same goals, though there exists a difference in severity (see Table 18). Champions maintain formal relationships with the political level in the policy implementation phase. The feedback loop between the CAG and the 'core ministers' occurs every three months. The champions and the CAG, update the whole Flemish government, every six

months about the reduction goals. The 'tally' is made public to the organizations every half year via formal communication.

4.1.3.6. Power distribution

Power is highly distributed in the CAG; there is, in other words, democratic decision-making. In the ad-hoc working group no one succeeds another and there are no hierarchical functions installed. The functioning of the working group was according to respondent 11, 18 & 19 a *“very chaotic process, with alternatives being thrown on the table, no vision, except the method about who to cut with how many percent. Actually, that's not a vision”*. According to respondent 19, most CEOs in the working group had already reduced staff numbers and budget a lot and hence said: *“I can hardly save, I've no room left”*. So, conflicts arose, between the ones who had already saved substantially and others yet to realize the savings. Subsequently, across-the-board cuts became the highest achievable goal. Apparently, in a sensitive dossier like this, organizations protect themselves strongly. As respondent 19 reported: *“you can protect your organization in a serious way, but this was not the case. The conflict escalated”*. The democratic decision-making and following conflict led to only one possible decision: cut everybody proportionally, across-the-board.

4.1.3.7. Accountability

Organizations must translate the goals in the performance agreements and personnel plans, which must be included in the yearly business plan, a document based on the multi-annual performance agreement (see Annex 2). The results of actions are supposed to be discussed during the yearly evaluation of the top civil servants. Organizations are judged on these results (and may even be punished) by the end of 2014. The accountability system is, hence, a hard type, based on performance indicators and involving sanctions.

4.1.3.8. Intensity

In the core austerity measures, the organizations coordinate for a joint effort. The organizations are 'supplier' to the government-wide austerity program. What initially could have been targeted cuts became a decision to cut the budgets and staff numbers in all organizations proportionally. According to respondent 16, there was not enough political courage to opt for targeted cuts:

“ultimately, there was not enough courage to go for it on the political level. There were such discussions with the ministers, but then it was decided to leave the design and decision

to the CAG. What did we notice: also the CAG cuts proportionately and you cannot even really blame them. I had personally preferred that the government would have taken a more concrete decision”.

Originally, some CEOs rejected these across-the board cuts and actually preferred targeted ones:

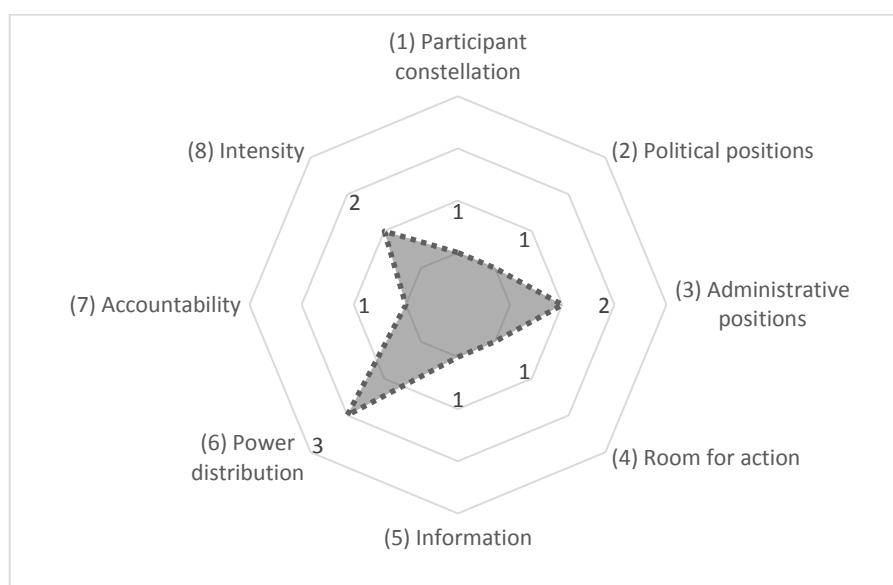
“there should have been more greater harmonization. Now, we are left with this statistical monitoring, but what else could you do with this task which should now be realized? Everybody is going to try to achieve it in a pragmatic manner, but obviously, it should have been about what should be our core tasks, functions, processes etc.” (respondent 18).

4.1.4. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

From the preceding discussion, we conclude that the austerity measures are coordinated with a tight coordination arrangement. In the legend of Graph 2 all elements of the coordination arrangement are scored⁹ (See Annex 1). They are also displayed in the graph, which demonstrates that the coordination arrangement is tight, except for the element power distribution (more explanation below). The analysis shows that tight coupling and authority are, in this dossier, the primal causal mechanisms that ‘force’ organizations to comply and achieve the envisioned objectives (Chisholm, 1989).

⁹ Every element of the coordination arrangement is scored on the basis of the IAD framework of Ostrom (2005). See for more explanation paragraph 3.2.2.2, on page 65 and Annex 1. The scale ranges from 1 – tightly coupled coordination arrangement to 4 – loosely coupled arrangement.

GRAPH 2: THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT DEPLOYED IN THE AUSTERITY MEASURES



ELEMENT IAD FRAMEWORK		ANALYSIS	
(1)	Participant constellation	Strict ordered linkages	1 (very tight)
(2)	Political positions	Unilateral coercive regulation	1 (very tight)
(3)	Administrative positions	Lead organization	2 (tight)
(4)	Room for action	Rule	1 (very tight)
(5)	Information	Direct formal information, standardized	1 (very tight)
(6)	Power distribution	Multiple participants, democratic decision-making	3 (loose)
(7)	Accountability	Performance-based accountability	1 (very tight)
(8)	Intensity	Coordination of independent action	2 (tight)

Most political and administrative actors assume that the *possible* interdependencies — that could have arisen when targeted cuts were chosen—would create many insecurities and conflicts. According to the interviewees, there was not enough courage (a.o. respondent 16) at the political level to select targeted cuts. When the administration made the decision itself, and when the organizations relied on democratic decision-making, conflicts arose and, subsequently, across-the-board cuts were chosen. Compared to other elements, this democratic decision-making is a very ‘loose aspect’. As a result of the ‘across-the-board cuts decision’, however, uncertainty was reduced, because all the involved organizations felt that they were judged similarly. Hence, the ‘possible interdependencies’ and the subsequent uncertainty that could arise were ‘tamed’ through centralization, sanctions, and control in different forms—ex-ante—in the decision-making process. This aligns with Chisholm (1992), who states that policy makers assume that the best way to deal with interdependence is centralization and tight coupling.

Political urgency seems to bring about tightly coupled coordination arrangements, especially through institutionalization, the room for action, and accountability relationships. The political urgency and short time horizon led to a situation that required quick decisions; this, in turn, tightened the arrangement quickly. The issue's urgency prompted a strong establishment of a political champion with the authority to sanction organizations. Furthermore, it led to a strict and ordered participant constellation, performance based accountability arrangements, and the appointment of a lead organization. It seems that only at a certain point of political urgency steps can be taken to proceed to implementation (certainly in a political sensitive dossier that affects the resources of many organizations). This conclusion stems from other research too (for instance by Jones & Baumgartner, 2008): organizations do not seem to adapt until urgency crosses a significant threshold. By focusing internal operations, the political principals could enforce the cuts. According to six of the respondents, a focus on core tasks, processes, the citizens, and society might have led to the more desired targeted cuts instead of turf wars.

4.2. ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION

At the European level, there is an increasing interest in the topic of quality of regulation, administrative simplification, and the removal of administrative burdens. Take, for example, the European summit held in Brussels in October 2013. Here, the debates revolve around the perceived need to embed new innovations, like e-government and digital economy; but they also lead to discussions about a 'healthy way' to administer and regulate organizations and citizens (Europese Raad, 2013, pp. 11–12). In addition to a focus on the quality of regulation at the European council, there is also a program, called REFIT, which aims to reduce administrative burdens in the EU zone (European Commission, 2012, p. 3). This chapter describes the coordination arrangement that the Flemish government uses to simplify administrative burdens. In the Flemish government, this cross-cutting policy is split up into:

1. Ex-ante quality of new regulation, and
2. Ex-post administrative simplification of existing regulation.

These are interrelated: the better the ex-ante control of the quality, the less administrative simplification needed afterwards.

4.2.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVE

The ex-ante goal aims to improve the quality of new regulation. Many European governments are implementing processes, structures, and instruments to review, ex-ante, the impact of regulation on citizens, companies, and clients. This includes building

institutional capacity within government to coordination for administrative simplification, enhancing transparency through consultation and communication, reorganizing the development of new regulations through impact assessment, composing alternatives to regulation, and clarifying administrative procedures and legal quality (Van Humbeeck, 2006). The Regulatory Impact Analysis is the main ex-ante instrument, in this respect, in Flanders. Internationally, this instrument remains important to improve the quality of new regulation.

The ex-post goal aims to simplify existing regulations and remove red tape. Internationally, this is accomplished, for example, by managing and rationalizing existing regulations, dealing with compliance of contradictory regulations, administrative and judicial review procedures, strengthening the interface between government-levels etc. (Van Humbeeck, 2006).

4.2.2. INSTRUMENTS OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The following paragraphs will describe the political and administrative champions, and structural and management instruments. Afterwards, the coordination arrangement, as a whole, is analyzed using the elements of the rules and elements of the IAD framework.

4.2.2.1. Political and administrative champions

Geert Bourgeois, the Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish government (at the time of the Coalition Agreement 2009-2014) is the minister appointed to handle administrative simplification. This includes both the ex-ante and the ex-post goals. Following a request of a few advisory boards and social partners, the Flemish parliament decided to establish a 'Knowledge Center' for Regulatory Management within the Flemish government in September 2001 (Somers, 2004, p. 1):

"... the Knowledge center for Regulatory Management, [...] will be a separate organization with its own management responsibility and coordinated directly by the Minister-President of the Flemish government. Its position will be within the Coordination Department, Chancery Division. After the reorganization [BBB red....] the knowledge center will be part of the organization "Legal and Regulatory Management" (under remit of the Minister-President, red.)." (Vlaamse Regering, 2001, p. 3).

Through the years, both the position and the tasks of the Knowledge center shifted. Originally, the knowledge center was part of the Chancellery of the Minister-President. After the major BBB reform (Better Governmental Policy reform - in Dutch: Beter Bestuurlijk Beleid) the Knowledge Centre became part of the Public Governance Department of the

vice-Minister-President. It did not, as was originally proposed, become part of the department of the Minister-President. The name changed through the years from Knowledge Center for Regulatory Management to the current Regulatory Management Unit.

Since 2009, there have been a few 'events' on the central government level. The ex-post goal: 'administrative simplification of existing regulation' is, for instance, embedded in the former coalition agreement (Vlaamse regering, 2009) and the cross-cutting program Flanders in Action (FiA) (Molenveld & Verhoest, 2014). Administrative simplification is a key project in the breakthrough n° 5 of Flanders in Action, which stipulated that the ministries must make action plans for administrative simplification, with a concrete reduction target by 2012. Another initiative is the Flemish Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA). It officially entered into force on October 1st 2010 (Vlaamse Overheid, 2010). It represents a commitment by the strategic advisory boards, Flemish government, and the Flemish parliament to support and apply the regulatory impact analysis (RIA). The IIA is not legally binding; rather, it is, primarily, a statement of intent.

4.2.2.2. Structural instruments

The monitoring and coordination role for the administrative simplification resides within the Department of Public Governance, more specifically in the central Regulatory Management Unit, under the competence of the Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish government. This unit is responsible for monitoring, reporting, and coordinating administrative simplification. The central Regulation Management Unit has a direct collaboration with the decentralized 'Regulatory Quality units', installed in 2006 by governmental approval, in every line ministry. The decentralized units are the first 'point of contact' for the central unit. They gather information about good regulation and report on the progress of administrative simplification within their own ministries (each ministry has a Regulatory Quality unit). This unit can contain one staff member or many. Some larger ministries have opted for the expansion of the units within single organizations. Consequently, those Regulatory Quality units also exist in larger agencies. Through the establishment of these units, the Flemish government aimed to improve the horizontal cross-cutting coordination between the ministries.¹⁰

¹⁰ Information obtained from a.o.: <https://www.bestuurszaken.be/cellen-wetskwaliteit>

4.2.2.3. Management instruments

There are three major management instruments: the Regulatory Impact assessment (RIA), the Compensation Rule for Administrative Burdens, and the Standard Cost Model. Of these, the RIA is most important.

Regulatory impact assessment

The RIA has been mandatory since 2005. All preliminary drafts of decrees and executive orders of the government, with a regulatory effect on citizens, businesses, and non-profits must include one. The assessment enables organizations wishing to introduce new or amended regulation to identify all the related costs and benefits (Dienst Wetsmatiging, 2014, p. 10). Through this structured process, all policy alternatives are mapped in one document, which highlights the positives and negatives of the newly proposed regulation. In other words, the RIA stimulates the administration and the politically competent minister(s) and organizations to think and rethink the impact of new regulation on citizens, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

There are several grounds for not completing an RIA in conjunction with new decrees and executive orders (Dienst Wetsmatiging, 2014, pp. 18–20); these imply that substantial parts of the new regulation will not require this document. The following fall outside of the RIA obligation:

- That should be urgently adopted.
- Concern "auto-regulation" that governs the operation of the government itself.
- On dossiers where the Flemish government has no free legal policy space (due to higher authorities; federal government, EU) or political policy space (because the government already has pre-approved or validated the policy contours—coalition agreement, policy programs).
- Without (significant) impact on society, with a mere formal character.
- On budget and taxation.
- About the implementation of policy plans and programs.
- Arise from international or inter-regional regulations.
- Ministerial decisions, circulars or mere decisions of the government.

Compensation Rule for Administrative Burdens

In addition to the RIA, the government also introduced a 'compensation rule for administrative burdens' (CRAL) in 2005. This compensation rule entails that, when adopting new regulations, any increase or decrease in the administrative burdens must be measured.

The scope of the compensation rule, and hence the exceptions thereof, coincides with those of the RIA.¹¹

Standard Cost Model

To determine whether the administrative burdens are rising or remaining constant, the standard cost model (SCM) is introduced (Regulatory Management Unit, 2014). The SCM generates a detailed overview of the cost and burdens per regulatory dossier. The European Commission and all EU Member States use this device frequently (Regulatory Management Unit, 2010, p.22). The SCM consists of a series of steps. First, determine the scope of the involved regulation. Next, identify the relevant actors and target groups. Then, make an inventory of the information obligations and administrative procedures asked of the target group to comply with the regulation. Finally, before calculating the administrative burdens, assess some parameters—e.g. time spent, the hourly rate (staff expenses) of the actors involved, and the ‘out-of-pocket’ expenses such as registered mail and transport costs. A first baseline measurement (t1 / 0-point) of administrative burdens occurred in 2007.¹² Annual progress reports monitor the current situation, and a summary of these reports is publicly available.¹³

To publish the results of the monitoring of the CRAL and the RIA, the Flemish government uses a database that contains measurements of the SCM and of the administrative burdens. This database, open to all organizations within the government, also offers a simulation tool for to assess roughly the impact that a certain regulation might have. The regulatory agenda, another tool, publicizes these results as well.¹⁴ It is publicly available and lists proposed new regulations and modifications to existing regulations. At the start of a new legislative period, all ministers state their major strategic choices and ‘regulation plans’. The policy papers, drawn up by individual ministers annually, allow the government to update the regulatory agenda.

To summarize, the timeline below gives an overview of the most important events.

- 2001: Decision to establish a Knowledge Center for Regulatory Management
- 2002: Knowledge Center for Regulatory Management becomes operational
- 2005:
 - o Regulatory Impact assessment is made obligatory
 - o The CRAL is made obligatory

11 Information obtained from a.o.: <https://www.bestuurszaken.be/compensatieregel>

12 Information obtained from a.o.: <https://www.bestuurszaken.be/meten-van-administratieve-lasten>

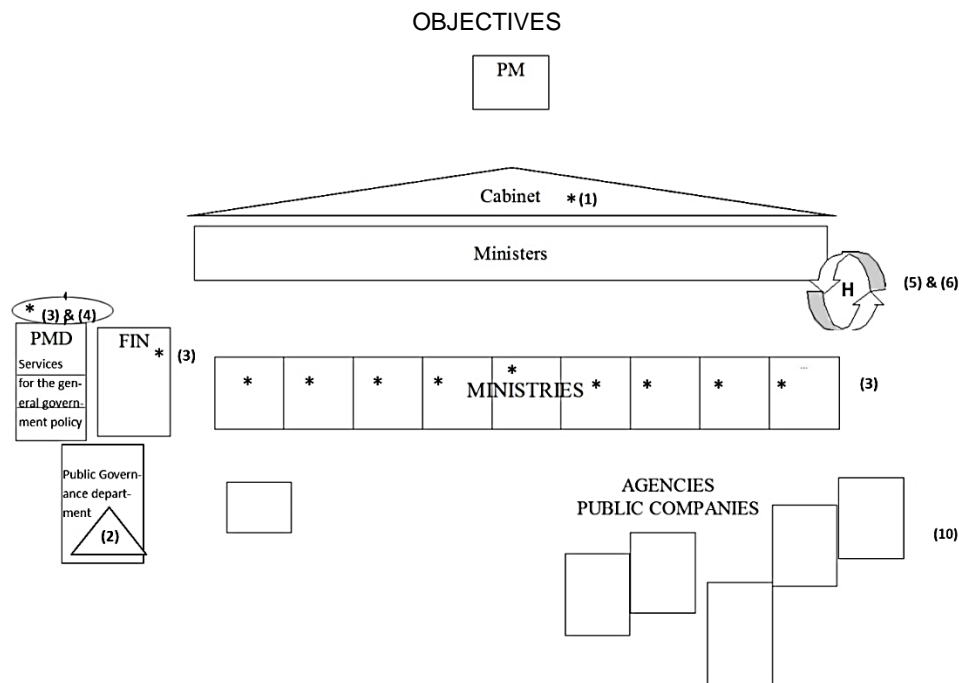
13 Information obtained from a.o.: <http://www.bestuurszaken.be/overzicht-actieplannen>

14 Information obtained from a.o.: <http://regelgevingsagenda.bestuurszaken.be/>

- 2006: Decentral Regulatory Quality Units are installed
- 2007: First baseline measurement of the administrative burdens in the Flemish government
- 2009: Integration of the ex-post goal in Coalition Agreement and Flanders in Action.
- 2010: Flemish Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) was signed

Figure 8 provides a schematic overview of all the agencies, departments, champions and instruments. This figure is solely intended to provide insight into the coordination structure and its instruments. It will not be further used in the analysis. The legend below the figure explains, number by number, which instruments and actors are shown in the figure.

FIGURE 8: COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT DEPLOYED IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION



Number	Figure	Explanation
(1)	*	Responsible minister – Vice-Minister-President – Department of Public Governance
(2)		Regulatory Management Unit
(3)	*	Decentral Regulatory Management Units
(4)		Monitoring of the administrative simplification, by the program office of Flanders in Action - Decisive Government, part of the services for the General Government Policy
(5)		Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and Compensation Rule for Administrative Burdens (CRAL)
(6)		Flemish Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA).

4.2.1. ANALYSIS OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The following paragraphs analyze the coordination arrangement using elements of the IAD framework. The analysis concludes by determining whether the arrangement is either tight or loose.

4.2.1.1. Participant constellation

There is a strong participant constellation among the Regulatory Management Unit and the decentralized quality units in the departments and organizations. This is a closed constellation with multi-level ordered linkages. There is a champion role for the decentralized units within each ministry. *De facto*, the decentralized regulatory quality units—intended to support the Regulatory Management Unit in its central role—do not always do so and do not have ministerial authority: *“It is not the case that the decentral regulatory quality units have the authority to look at processes within their ministry and can say what should be done differently”* (respondent 11). The units were installed to improve the cross-cutting collaboration, but in practice this is not the case.

Next to this formal participant constellation, there are some bottom-up initiatives by the organizations to achieve the ex-post goal. Only if the departments and agencies feel an added value and need do they cooperate with the decentralized quality units, and certainly not in a systematic manner. There is, according to a few interviewees, willingness to work on these issues on the operational level, especially on ex-post simplification based on voluntary contributions: *“the willingness to work together is certainly there, for instance among many department heads and policy advisers. Among people who are in the field, professionals, there is a huge willingness to cooperate”* (respondent 13). Most respondents share this sentiment.

4.2.1.2. Political positions

De jure, the ex-ante goal of instituting the RIA and the CRAL was unilaterally imposed. The competent minister can enforce their use, but, according to all respondents, he does not actively promote the objectives in the government or ministry. One interviewee states: *“The first conclusion is that it is difficult to identify a political champion or coordinator for these objectives”* (Respondent 12). The horizontal political ownership, especially, is a problem: *“It is seen too much as a project of that minister of that specific organization and everyone says: do it, but don’t bother us”* (respondent 12). The interviewee explains that the political support was initially present (while there was also attention at the EU and federal level), but declined sharply through the years:

“before it was a competence of the Minister-President, which was perhaps better because he could play a more authoritarian role. Nowadays, we notice that there is no real political leadership around this objective” (respondent 12).

According to the respondents, it is difficult to prioritize the issue if political leaders pay no attention to collaborative efforts or heed advice. Meanwhile, the ex-post goal is lead minister governed with voluntary contributions by organizations to achieve objectives.

4.2.1.3. Administrative positions

De facto, organizations who want to introduce, amend, or simplify regulation govern their own actions regarding administrative simplification. This process can be facilitated by the Regulation Management Unit, but this unit is not hierarchically overruling or legally authorized to force other organizations to comply. Rather, it must persuade, train, and facilitate:

“The capacity of the Regulatory Management unit is limited, but also the culture in other organizations is also not open to allow people from the horizontal departments in (respondent 15).

Although the Central Regulatory Management Unit and the decentralized units in the ministries are structurally installed, the coordination structure remains loose. The Central Regulatory Management Unit interacts with the decentralized units and individual organizations, yet the organizations themselves determine the goals and actions. The decentralized units are autonomous, with limited mutual interactions, and have a different orientation in every policy domain.

4.2.1.4. Room for action

To establish the room for action that organizations have Ostrom (2005) analyzes mission statements. These statements can be formulated as rules, norms, strategies and statements. As the mission statement below clarifies, the ex-ante goal is formulated as a strategy. The mission consists of an aim, attribute, and deontic. The strategy, however, does not elaborate on of what must or may be done. In other words, the deontic is not clear. Furthermore, the aim is not really clear. For instance, it does not state the outcome of the ex-ante goal of reducing the burdens for citizens—in other words, the very focus of the policy:

“The aim is to contribute to better information which is taken into consideration during the approval process of regulation (aim). The implementation of RIA is a clear responsibility of each department (attribute) (...) The person or authority preparing new regulations, is also responsible (attribute) for the implementation of the regulatory impact analysis. Finally, the Flemish minister who submits the draft regulations (attribute) to the Flemish government responsible for the content of the RIA. (...) Regulatory Impact Analysis is best performed by the project team which is preparing the new legislation as well. In the drawing-up the RIA it will be useful to involve other government departments and the target group (...). A RIA must (deontic) be prepared for all regulations that have a regulatory impact on citizens, businesses or nonprofit organizations. This includes all preliminary draft decrees and draft decisions, unless it relates to one or more of the exceptions” (Somers, 2004, p. 7).

In the ex-post goal there is a norm formulated:

“The action plans ‘administrative simplification’ with the associated reduction goals of the ministries (attributes) have to lead (deontic) by 2012 (condition) to concrete, noticeable administrative simplification (-20% aim) compared to the first baseline measurement in 2009”. “The action plan of the Minister-President of Public Governance has to lead by 2014 to cross-ministry and cross-government levels administrative simplification” (Vlaamse Regering & CAG, 2011).

4.2.1.5. Information

With the ex-ante goal, there exist only a few information channels. The Central Regulatory Management Unit publishes formal newsletters, measures the administrative burdens, and relies on other formal and informal channels. For instance, the Flemish government has a special database, based on the measurements of the SCM to communicate the results of the CRAL and the RIA. This database, however, is not ‘alive’:

“there are good instruments, but they are not used or not alive in the organizations. That is true in case of the Regulatory Agenda and the RIA, and other instruments as well” (Respondent 15).

According to some champions, it remains difficult to access and interact with information: *“We always try to get that foot-between-the-door and then we hope to get an invitation to join in” (respondent 13).* Another champion: *“when you are not allowed to enter and meet, you have to rely on providing training” (respondent 15).* So, communication and interaction is achieved through formal channels, with the possibility to ‘notice and comment’. Furthermore,

the champions train organizations in favor of the instruments or to reduce administrative burdens.

With the ex-post goal, the story is similar. The Central Regulatory Management Unit provides active support to the organizations of all vertical ministries by disseminating information and guidelines on (de)regulation. In addition to the Central Regulatory Management Unit's input, there are ad-hoc bilateral contacts or even more formal platforms (for instance, shared management committees) among organizations. These often bottom-up initiatives work well in some cases. Yet there is no cross-cutting collaboration at the level of the whole government. According to one interviewee, this stems from transparency issues and fears of openness:

"In terms of openness and transparency I score the Flemish government: zero [...] what counts is: information is power. The leading officials decided in this case [...] who gets information and who does not " (respondent 15).

4.2.1.6. Power distribution

The power distribution among the participants is pluricentric with different coordinators in multiple, fully autonomous organizations. According to one respondent, this inhibits horizontal collaboration, which the structure of Flemish Government also aggravates:

"An organization is independent, autonomous. "Responsible", with a nice word. And that means in many heads: we do our own thing, and continue writing regulation. So, when introducing new government-wide tasks this is met with much resistance, like: do not interfere with our organization" (respondent 14).

The perception is that the situation—in terms of getting rid of red tape—is getting worse: *"there are lots of "repair decrees" and thus a reduction of quality of regulation as a result. There is certainly insufficient political enthusiasm and political leadership to prioritize such issues"* (respondent 12).

4.2.1.7. Accountability

De jure, there exists performance-based accountability with sanctions and rewards and the possibility to investigate actual institutional behavior in the ex-ante goal. The instruments for ex-ante deregulation are, de jure, obliged and used to assess the impact of the actions of

the organizations. Yet these seem, de facto, rather easy to get around. The RIA must be attached to new regulation and should pass the advisory boards, the state council (in Dutch: Raad van State), and the parliament, as an explanatory memorandum. Apparently, however, a share of RIAs are made ex-post to comply with the agreement: *“that is the whole problem with the RIA, first one writes the new piece of regulation, afterwards one makes a RIA”* (respondent 15, also confirmed by respondent 12). Although the RIA and CRAL seem obligatory, they remain relatively easy to ignore by citing an exception.

With the ex-post goal, the Department of Public Governance publishes all evaluation reports on its website and makes them free for all; sometimes they even undergo peer-review. Yet many organizations disregard this:

“That is a problem with these evaluations of administrative simplification: there are piles of papers and reports, but, if there is no political attention or sanctions and if there is no political coordinator, or no negative evaluations when there are serious troubles ...” (respondent 12).

“Yeah well, if the cross-cutting task is only such a small piece, compared to all other task in the performance agreement, and it’s time to evaluate, then yes, it is only one small goal between the 25 targets” (respondent 11).

This suggests an accountability system focused only on peer review and dissemination of information that lacks a system for sanctions or inspections.

4.2.1.8. Intensity

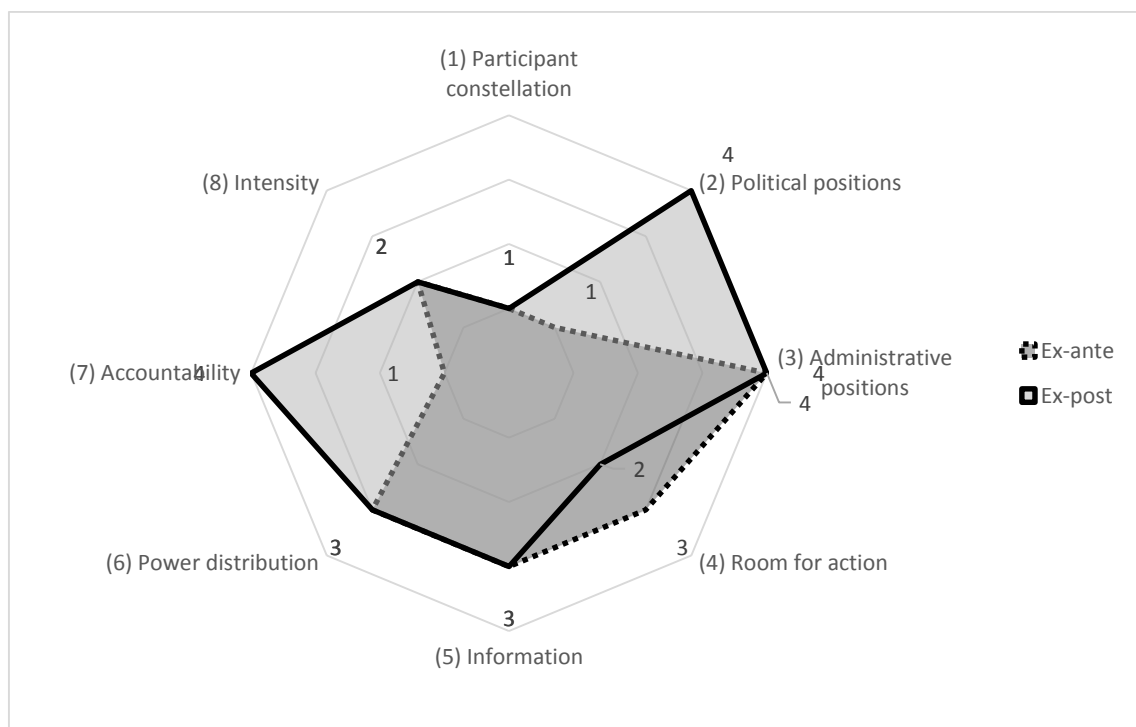
The ex-ante and ex-post goals are meant to coordinate otherwise independent action. *De facto*, this process is corrupted by the non-use or pro forma use of the instruments. Reports from the OECD (2010, p. 25) and SERV (Van Humbeeck, 2006) mention RIA use in the Flemish government. According to the former, Flanders does not support civil servants to use the instrument. The interviews support this finding, but respondents add that this results, partially, from political inattention to the RIA. Relatedly, government members do not properly or sufficiently use the regulatory agenda (respondent 15 & SERV, 2014, p. 21). Indeed, though published online¹⁵, it is often outdated and, therefore, its potential remains unrealized according to respondent 15.

¹⁵ <http://regelgevingsagenda.bestuurszaken.be/>

4.2.2. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

The administrative simplification objectives reveal two different coordination arrangements (see Graph 3) both mixed, but different on many aspects. The comparison between the content of the documents, *de jure*, and actual practice is important as it shows substantial differences between formal requirements and actual practice. Although formulated, *de jure*, as a tight coordination arrangement, the goals, *de facto*, developed into an easily-ignored, hybrid coordination arrangement. Implementation is lacking; one of the respondents even speaks of "a paper policy", which consists of figures and reports without much content (respondent 15). Many interviewees emphasize that the Flemish government has too many rules and regulations; as one interviewee states: *"That's pretty typical to young federal countries. People tend to say: wow, we have our own responsibility now, and jump on it and write regulation without too much thought"* (respondent 12).

GRAPH 3: THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT DEPLOYED IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATION OBJECTIVES



ELEMENT IAD FRAMEWORK		ANALYSIS			
		Ex-ante		Ex-post	
(1)	Participant constellation	Closed/restricted, ordered linkages	1 (very tight)	Closed/restricted, ordered linkages	1 (very tight)
(2)	Political positions	Unilateral coercive government regulation	1 (very tight)	Lead minister governed, with voluntary contribution	4 (very loose)
(3)	Administrative positions	Internally participant governed	4 (very loose)	Internally participant governed	4 (very loose)
(4)	Room for action	Strategy	3 (loose)	Norm	2 (tight)
(5)	Information	Information from a coordination function, with possibility to 'notice and comment'	3 (loose)	Information from a coordination function, with possibility to 'notice and comment'	3 (loose)
(6)	Power distribution	Pluricentric; coordinators in multiple organizations	3 (loose)	Pluricentric; coordinators in multiple organizations	3 (loose)
(7)	Accountability	Performance-based accountability	1 (very tight)	Peer review	4 (very loose)
(8)	Intensity	Coordination of otherwise independent action; joint effort/joint planning	2 (tight)	Coordination of otherwise independent action; joint effort/joint planning	2 (tight)

Although there are, *de jure*, some elements of tight coupling in the ex-ante dossier, the lack of political attention and the potential exceptions applicable to the RIA and CRAL undoes them. In this case, the declining *political urgency* loosens the coupling of the organizations to the administrative simplification objectives. Though political urgency was initially present, all interviewees claim that it declined over the years. For the respondents, attention from top officials is essential for its success. Without this attention, the legitimacy and value of the instruments is nonexistent. As a respondent explains, the pro forma use of the instruments become window dressing for compliance with the Flemish Inter-institutional Agreement. The instruments become, though they are not conceived as, an administrative burden in and of themselves: *"there are many reports produced and there are many good intentions, but the actions are not sufficiently coordinated and display too few concrete achievements"* (Respondent 15). Furthermore, with little political follow-up or attention during the evaluation or bilateral meeting between minister and organization, the organization has no incentive to prioritize administrative simplification objectives.

In the ex-ante goal there are some *interdependencies*, but these neither tighten nor loosen the coordination arrangement. Some RIAs are collaborative efforts between the organizations and all other stakeholders in a consultation process. *De facto*, many new regulations do not contain RIAs, or they are written afterwards and, therefore, do not include extensive consultation. The organizations in this dossier depend on the political process and political actors as well. Often the ministerial cabinet initiates new regulation, but, if they are

not interested in consulting with stakeholders, the RIA loses its legitimacy. The ex-post goal, in some instances, transcends the organizational boundaries; take, for instance, the case of bottom-up initiatives. Many initiatives, however, focus on the organizations themselves, and, without much cross-cutting collaboration, interdependencies are minimal.

First, there remains room for action in both goals, but the power is highly distributed in different organizations. Moreover, these organizations have little information about each other. For instance, because the regulatory agenda is not kept up-to-date, organizations are not aware of the upcoming regulatory initiatives of other ministers. Second, the interviews highlight that administrative simplification objectives have to cope with fragmentation, because of the Flemish government's structure. The silo-ization in the coordination arrangement exacerbates this fragmentation by establishing decentralized regulatory units in ministries. These decentralized Quality Units have no forum to meet regularly. Third, the regulatory management units have little authority to establish a cross-cutting dynamic. At the moment, they have little hierarchical decision-making power to play the coordination-role.

Moreover, task tensions emerge because the ex-ante and ex-post goal are combined in one unit—Cordova-Novion (2011) has made this point also. The central regulatory management unit has an expert role and should make a technical judgement about, for instance, the quality of the RIA and the administrative burdens in the ex-ante goal. This monitoring or expert role conflicts with the trainer and stimulator roles in the ex-post goal. A possible solution to counteract fragmentation is the implementation of a central coordination body, according to the respondents, like the Regulatory Management Unit, but with sufficient expertise and competence.

As an interviewee stressed, a culture focused on the target group, and a genuine interest in what impact regulation and policy decisions have on citizens could bring about cross-cutting collaboration (Respondent 13). Non-implementation stems from a lack of focus on the client, according to three interviewees. Instead of only 'counting' administrative burdens, there should be more communication about best practices. Furthermore, the use of rewards and sanctions could be enhanced.

4.3. INTEGRATED YOUTH CARE¹⁶

In the nineties, it became clear that specific groups of youngsters were not helped satisfactorily, e.g. they were driven from pillar to post, or care was very ad hoc without follow-up. These youngsters required a more integrated approach due to the complexity of their

¹⁶ Major parts of the first part of this chapter are published as a book chapter and article: Verhoest, K., Voets, J., & Molenveld, A. (2014). And Voets, J., Verhoest, K., & Molenveld, A. (2015). See also: Van Tomme, Verhoest, Voets, & De Peuter (2011).

problems (e.g. the client's trouble was not only a matter of school attendance, but also related to family situations, emotional stress, etc.). This paragraph describes the coordination practice of Integrated Youth Care (IYC), a cross-sector policy program of the Flemish government that aims to achieve a coordinated approach to help multi-problem youngsters and their next of kin. IYC is both a goal and policy program; a coordinated approach to help troubled young people facing multiple problems (e.g. health issues, multi-problem family, school drop-out, mental issues, ...) that requires a multi-faceted care strategy. The coordination of IYC is an interesting case to analyze because it entails a mixed horizontal and vertical coordination strategy in order to align actors from multiple policy sectors – i.e. to achieve joined-up government within parts of government. We analyze how the Flemish government developed and implemented a coordination arrangement to emphasize collaboration.

4.3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVE

The coordination practice of IYC was initiated because the matter was salient: many actors reported gaps in the system, and a number of incidents were also reported in the press. A new policy framework and law named 'Decree Integrated Youth Care' was approved on May 7, 2004 in the Flemish parliament. The goal of IYC is to achieve a coordinated approach to help troubled young people and their next of kin. The Decree describes the goals, target group, central principles and policy lines, which are essential building blocks to achieve the overall coordination aim to provide IYC:

1. The modularization of the 'supply' of youth care: in order to get a grip on the fragmented and wide range of care, the government wanted to define these care activities in the different sectors into more 'standardized' packages that could then be linked to a more systematic referral system between care organizations and the creation of care trajectories. This standardization should create proper care chains, achieving co-ordination between aid actors at the operational, service delivery level.
2. Introduction of the distinction between those actors and services that are directly accessible ('RTJ') to youngsters (e.g. a center for mental health where they can go without referral) and those that require a referral ('NRTJ') by another actor, like crisis centers to which young people can be referred by a center for mental health. The latter is often more far-reaching and/or expensive and therefore a referral should be required. This policy line would help to separate different 'types' of issues youngsters face, so that each 'type' would be channeled to the right service delivery chain, and ensuring the most costly services ('NRTJ') would be used only if necessary.

3. The creation of Networks for Direct Accessible Youth Care ('NRTJ') at (sub) regional level: most of the youth care in Flanders is directly accessible to young people. All providers in a certain region would be joined by these networks. The networks have goals that can only be achieved if the providers collaborate. Their main task is the organization of a qualitative access to youth care, ensuring that a client, regardless of 'which door he knocks on', is directed to those modules most fitting his needs and questions. Other tasks include setting up a system of care coordination and creating awareness in organizations by distributing information on the access and possibilities of integrated youth care. Hence, these networks are regional coordination platforms enabling better cooperation of actors involved, aiming for better service delivery.
4. The creation of Networks for Emergency Care ('Netwerken crisisjeugdhulp') at (sub)regional level: Although there are long waiting lists for certain types of care (e.g. places in residential care), there are emergency or crisis situations in which an immediate response is required, like an attempted suicide or domestic violence. These networks aim to optimize the access and operations of the Flemish emergency care. Regional crisis registration centers have procedures and up-to-date overviews of available types of places in institutions. They would provide short term relief.
5. The creation of an inter-sector portal/gateway to indirectly accessible modules of youth care: this portal would allow the primary/directly accessible actors to refer youngsters, if necessary, to other actors, using modules to ensure a systematic referral basis. The portal should ensure that clients are treated equally, that services delivered for a certain issue are comparable and understandable for all actors involved, and it should function as a neutral 'dispatching service' for clients.
6. The introduction of guidance in care trajectories: This should ensure that youngsters are not only referred to the right actors, but also monitoring to what extent the problems are solved or not.
7. The clarification of the relationship with judicial youth care: judicial or legal youth care involves the federal level, featuring care strategies that are linked to legal proceedings and legal protection – this type of care does not require consent of youngsters, but is forced or mandatory. While the Flemish government holds most relevant competences, the federal government also controls part of the aid spectrum. By clarifying the relationship between both, overlap or blind spots in the aid of both actors should be abolished and efficiency gains can be reached.
8. The introduction of a system for inter-sector data processing: To provide integrated care, the exchange of information between care organizations about the client is vital. Information on clients was not shared, and each actor and sector had their own data sources and information management systems. Communication between actors was

difficult or absent for various reasons (e.g. privacy laws). This system should provide the informational backbone for the coordination of IYC: it ensures informed interactions and allows for evaluation of the coordination at the strategic and operational levels.

9. The establishment of Platforms to coordinate policy: to achieve this, a permanent coordination between policies and actions of the various sectors at different levels is required. It is clear that these policy lines are of very different nature and focus: they involve substantive issues (e.g. defining modules), process and structural issues (e.g. creating networks to deliver care), information issues (e.g. monitoring) and policy issues (e.g. coordinating between different policies). Some of these policy lines are developed in the Decree in more detail, while other elements had to be further defined and operationalized in implementing orders, to be taken by the Flemish government ('uitvoeringsbesluiten').

After a number of years, new policy lines were added:

10. Societal necessity: this is a merger of elements from other policy lines, namely the relation with legal youth care, and is linked to emergency care. While emergency care is mostly dependent on the consent of the clients, there are also urgent situations in which clients (young people or their parents) do not ask for care themselves, but require immediate help, which if necessary is imposed by a juvenile court.
11. Regional projects: collaborative initiatives by care workers in regions through an ad hoc project (e.g. making a certain joint care tool) may be subsidized by the Flemish government as part of IYC. It provides an instrument to experiment with and test coordination initiatives.

4.3.2. INSTRUMENTS OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The institutional make-up of the health and care sector in Flanders is fragmented and featured by six strong (sub-)sectors (see Table 19). However, these sectors are organized at different levels (central, regional and local), operate very autonomously within separate administrative units, have different types of target groups (e.g. defined by age, type of problem, ...), have staff from different backgrounds and have their own specific instruments and services.

TABLE 19: ACTORS INVOLVED IN INTEGRATED YOUTH CARE

	At the level of the central administration	At the local level
(1) Children and family affairs	Child and Family Agency ('Kind en Gezin' or 'K&G');	Different organizations (e.g. Centres for Integrated Family Care — 'Centrum voor Integrale Gezinszorg' or 'CIG'; Trust Centres for Child Abuse — 'Vertrouwenscentrum Kindermishandeling' or 'VK')
(2) Disabled persons	Flemish Agency for the Disabled ('Vlaams Agentschap voor Personen met een Handicap' or 'VAPH');	Different organizations (e.g. Day Care Centres)
(3) General welfare work	Department of Welfare, Health and Family ('Departement WVG');	Centers for General Well-being ('Centra Algemeen Welzijnswerk' or 'CAW')
(4) Mental health	Agency for Care and Health ('Agentschap Zorg and Gezondheid');	Centers for Mental Care ('Centra voor Geestelijke Gezondheidszorg' or 'CGG')
(5) Youth care	Agency for Well-being of Young Persons ('Agentschap Jongerenwelzijn' or 'AJ');	Different organizations (including closed centres for juvenal delinquents)
(6) Student counseling	Ministry of Education ('Ministerie van Onderwijs');	Centers for Student Counseling ('Centra voor Leerlingenbegeleiding' or 'CLB')

Five sectors are part of one ministry of the Flemish government, being the 'Ministry of Welfare, Health and Family'. The sixth sector is part of the ministry of Education and due to its nature applies very different approaches. In each of these sectors, much of the care activities are delivered by various non- and social-profit organizations, which are often organized at different tiers and protected by powerful umbrella organizations. Moreover, these organizations are quite heavily subsidized and regulated by the six involved sectoral Flemish administrations, but they still retain considerable autonomy in the way they deliver their care activities to youngsters. Care activities and approaches are developed separately within the different sectors without much structured concentration. Hence, the challenge of IYC is to break through these 'silos' and coordinate the strategies and actions of these different sectors.

To achieve non-hierarchical intersectoral and multi-level collaboration, IYC policies and actions are developed through network arrangements at different levels. All these structures concern youth, but the focus varies depending on the type of issues they face, and the consultation between care workers from organizations in the field, their management, and policy actors at different levels. IYC wants to achieve its results by deploying a collaborative governance model and envisaged a restructuring of the youth care service delivery in four

subfields: directly-accessible youth care (RTJ), indirectly accessible youth care (NRTJ), emergency and crisis care, and legal youth care. Each would be accessible by their own access portals, where youngsters are screened (and dispatched) to direct them to optimal care. Three IYC-principles are: (1) a single proper entrance/reception for the young person and optimal reference to the most appropriate care providers, (2) optimal coordination between care providers, and (3) continuity in the care trajectory of the involved youngster following steps 1 and 2. In order to make this work, the organization and structuring of the access portals is essential: the broad entry through RTJ, the societal necessity for legal youth care, the intersectoral portal for NRTJ, and the registration center for emergency youth care (Integrale Jeugdhulp, 2010).

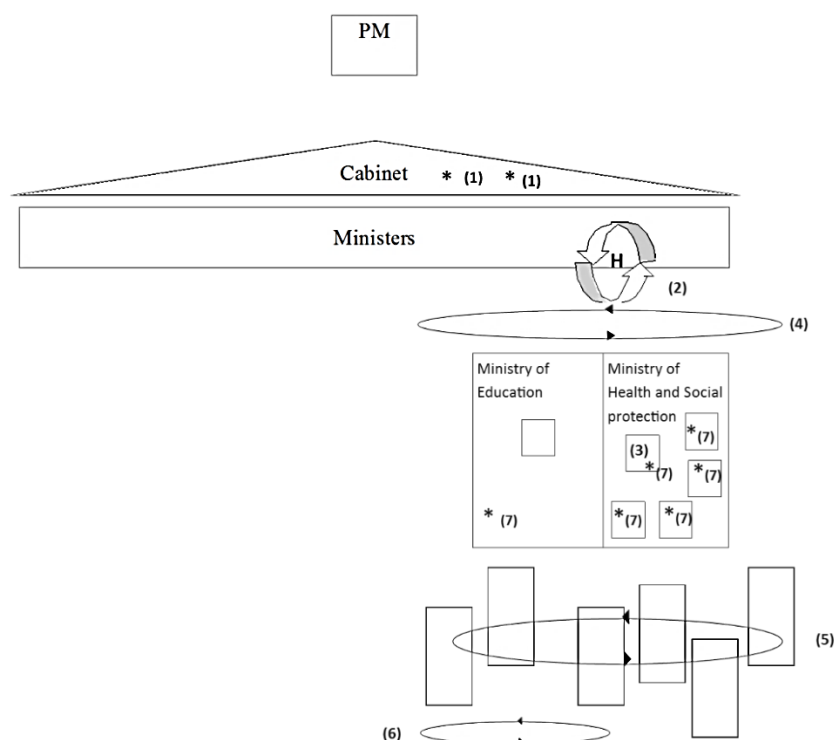
On the level of Flanders (i.e. the central level), the so-called management committee unites the top civil servants of the six sectoral administrations involved in IYC, supported by a policy support team ('BOT'). They are supported by a staff of policy experts and an advisory board consisting of aid providers from different sectors and client representatives. They interact with the political level, involving at least two ministers, and are advised by an advisory council on IYC, made up of various stakeholders, like client representatives. A special task force with a program manager was created at the Flemish level. The Flemish administration also deployed regional teams to organize and monitor the policy lines concerned. In terms of financial resources, the picture is not very clear, but most resources involved manpower and time rather than direct financial support (some exceptions include limited budgets for regional projects).


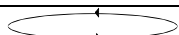
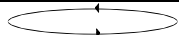
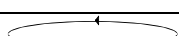
On a lower scale, there are six regions with regional steering groups. These include separate steering groups for networks for indirectly accessible youth care (14 in total) and networks for emergency care (10 in total). These network steering groups are supported by Flemish civil servants who act as network managers. Formally, network managers are responsible for supporting the local network steering groups and regional steering groups; supporting deliberation in the steering groups both related to substantive and practical matters; synthesizing information on progress of the network and providing feedback to network steering groups; communicating from other levels and structures to the network and vice versa; stimulating and facilitating the transition process in each stage; and monitoring agreements made in the network. They are also the liaison between the network and the government by monitoring policy evolutions in IYC, communicating them and linking them with regional dynamics, and safeguarding the goals, planning and rules of IYC.

The most basic coordination level is the daily interaction between individual care workers in the field and their clients. This level has no separate structure – it is case-per-case dependent and ad hoc. 'Regional Projects' were created as an instrument, providing regions with more autonomy to deal with certain goals in their regional plan. These projects are

various and appreciated, but a major criticism is that the money is only available for a limited period of time and successful projects came to a halt once funding stopped. In Figure 9 a schematic overview of all the agencies, departments, champions and instruments is provided. This figure is solely intended to provide insight into the coordination structure and its instruments. It will not be further used in the analysis. The legend below the figure explains, number by number, which instruments and actors are shown in the figure.

FIGURE 9: OVERVIEW OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT DEPLOYED IN INTEGRATED YOUTH CARE

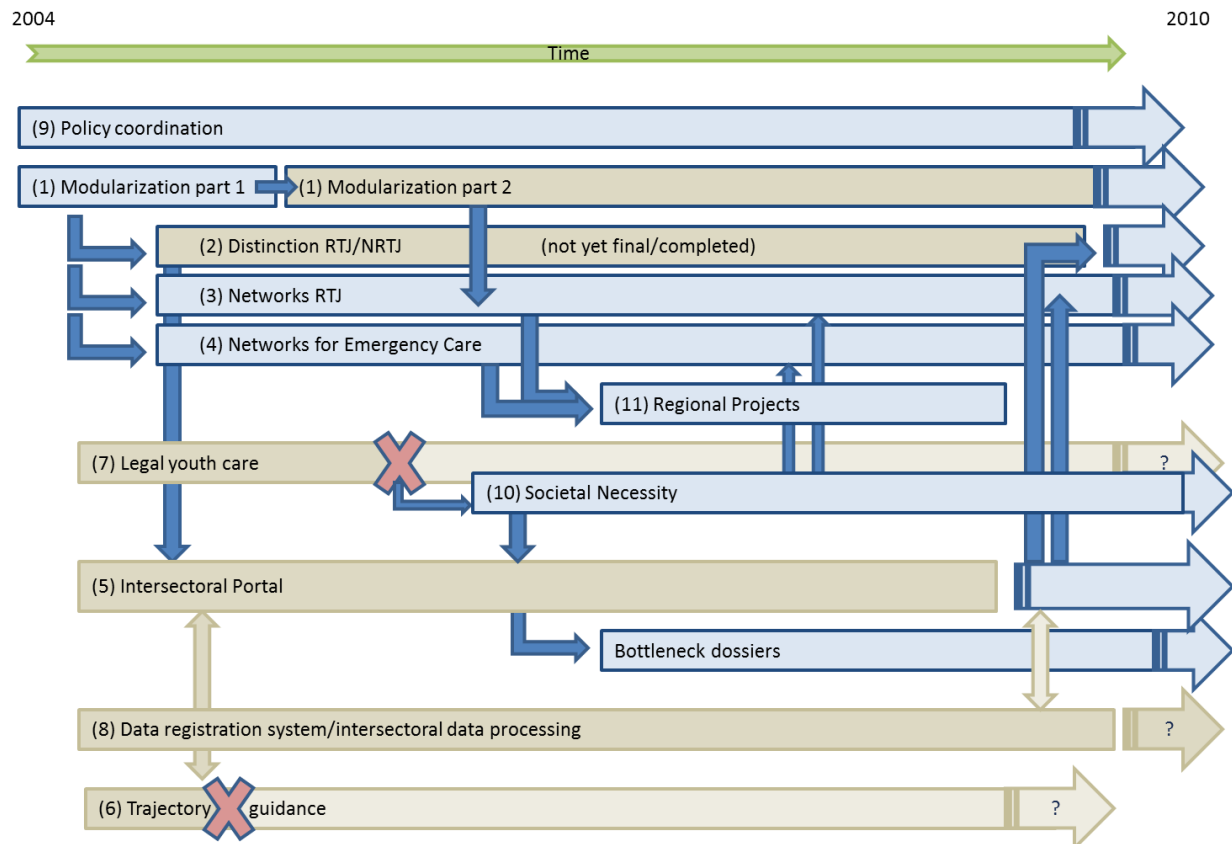


Number	Figure	Explanation
(1)	*	Responsible ministers: - Minister of Social protection and Health - Minister of Education
(2)		Decree Integrated Youth Care
(3)	*	Policy support team ('BOT'), part of the Department of Social Protection and Health
(4)		Management committee with CEOs of the involved administrations
(5)		Regional steering groups: - networks for indirectly accessible youth care - networks for emergency care
(6)		IYC advisory council, made up of various stakeholders, like client representatives
(7)	*	Network managers supporting the local network steering groups and regional steering groups, representatives of the administration

Time frame

Concerning timing, Figure 10 explains the very complex implementation process. The numbers represent the policy lines mentioned under the paragraph '*description of the cross-cutting policy objective*'.

LINES



4.3.3. ANALYSIS OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The following paragraphs analyze the coordination arrangement using the elements of the IAD framework. Ultimately, the analysis concludes whether the arrangement is either tight or loose.

4.3.3.1. Participant constellation

Many departments and agencies of the Flemish government, political actors, and various civil society organizations are involved in Integrated Youth Care. As a consequence, there is a permanent multi-level coalition between these actors. On a lower level, in the policy sectors concerned (i.e. health/welfare, education), the social-profit/not-for-profit actors hold strong positions, through their umbrella organizations and connections to different political parties (Respondent 5). Various decrees and financial support sectoral government subsidies institutionalize their strong positions (Respondent 6).

4.3.3.2. Political positions

De jure, the implementation of Integrated Youth Care (IYC) is based on a decree, or a unilateral agreement, with executive orders. De facto, implementing IYC is considered a rather 'operational and technical' matter, requiring much administrative effort (respondent 1). The issue seems, on the one hand, politically salient, because it involves troubled youth and addresses the problems of many families and citizens. Moreover, the policy issue concerns power bases and vested interests in the welfare, health, and education sectors linked to certain politicians and political parties. Therefore, the policy issue is always monitored by politicians (even by an ad-hoc committee in the Flemish parliament). On the other hand, frequent ministerial turnover and the risk aversion of involved ministers results in a lack of political attention and delays in the process (respondent 6, 5).

4.3.3.3. Administrative positions

On the central level, a so-called management committee unites the CEOs of the six sectoral administrations involved in IYC. This is a network governed form of steering, with a policy support team (in Dutch: 'BOT' – beleidsondersteunend team) from the Department of Welfare, Health and Family Affairs aiding the management committee (Respondent 6). The team includes one project manager, six staff members, and a secretary. While the Decree and execution orders install and operationalize all foreseen bodies and structures, their influence on the coordination process seems limited. For example, administrations often do not follow up on the decisions taken by the management committee (Respondent 6).

4.3.3.4. Room for action

By analyzing the mission statement of Integrated Youth Care (see underneath), we can assess if this is a strategy, norm, or rule (see Ostrom, 2005). The initial plan of Integrated Youth Care is a statement. It consists of an aim (intersectoral coordination) and attributes (youth care services).

"Integrated youth care seeks to enhance the opportunities of minors (aim), their parents, their guardians and the people involved in their communities, and to promote their welfare and health. Integrated youth care contributes to the fullest possible integration of minors (aim) in society. It aims, through cross-sectoral cooperation (aim) between youth services providers and intersectoral coordination of the youth care services (attributes), to provide a continuum of youth care in response to a question of a youngster in need" (Integrale Jeugdhulp, 2004).

4.3.3.5. Information

There are countless networks in this process and, as a result, mainly informal information transmitted through interpersonal contacts. Many partners feel disappointed with the use of their involvement. There is an impressive stream of written and impersonal communication and documentation to update participants (mostly regional and network steering groups, but also management committee). On the other hand, they soon lose overview (Respondent 7). A well-intentioned communication flow seems to achieve the opposite effect and leads to disinformation. Furthermore, information and feedback between government and network-levels seems to get 'filtered' along the way. As a result, during the instrument development process (e.g. policy recommendations, tools), alienation occurs and partners no longer recognize themselves, their input, or their organizations (Respondent 4).

4.3.3.6. Power distribution

There was no lead coordinator in the process. Instead, there were multiple actors who employed democratic decision-making to determine actions. This was, however, a very challenging task (Respondent 7), as the following examples make clear. The development of a system for intersectoral data failed, despite preparatory work. Aligning the different systems in the involved sectors proved demanding and highly complex. Such a system proved crucial to achieve coordination, because the lack of intersectoral data impeded the clear diagnosis of problematic intersectoral trajectories, the number of ingoing and outgoing youth, and the effects of such care. A modularization of the 'supply' of youth care was prepared and a tool created (database and guide), but the desired effects were not achieved: providers did not think or act in terms of the modules, the modules did not make the supply more transparent, organizations did not adapt or create new care programs, and there was no identification and reduction of overlapping care. The lack of added value and the failed projects made it difficult to convince skeptical actors within different sectors, and reluctant to support this reform, that a better institutionalized coordination was indeed necessary (a.o. respondent 5 and 10).

4.3.3.7. Accountability

There is insufficient clarity about accountability and responsibility in the process. While there exists much dissemination of, and access to information, there exists no accountability system. Who is responsible for what? How are actors held accountable? What can and should a network do? What lies within its discretion? Management committee members declared that they take little responsibility for what goes wrong in the region, because the

committee does not have the space, authority, or instruments to intervene (respondent 6). There is, according to the respondents, perhaps too much belief that voluntary contributions and consultations can realize IYC (respondent 5). There is no mandate to fulfill a particular coordination or meta-governance (Sorensen, 2006) role, in whole process and in the organizations acting in network structures. Take, for example, the Intersectoral Portal. People hesitated to share responsibility for the intersectoral gateway, fearing their control, tools, and mandate would change. Clarifying what would happen and who is accountable and responsible for what could help, according to the respondents (a.o. respondent 6,7,4).

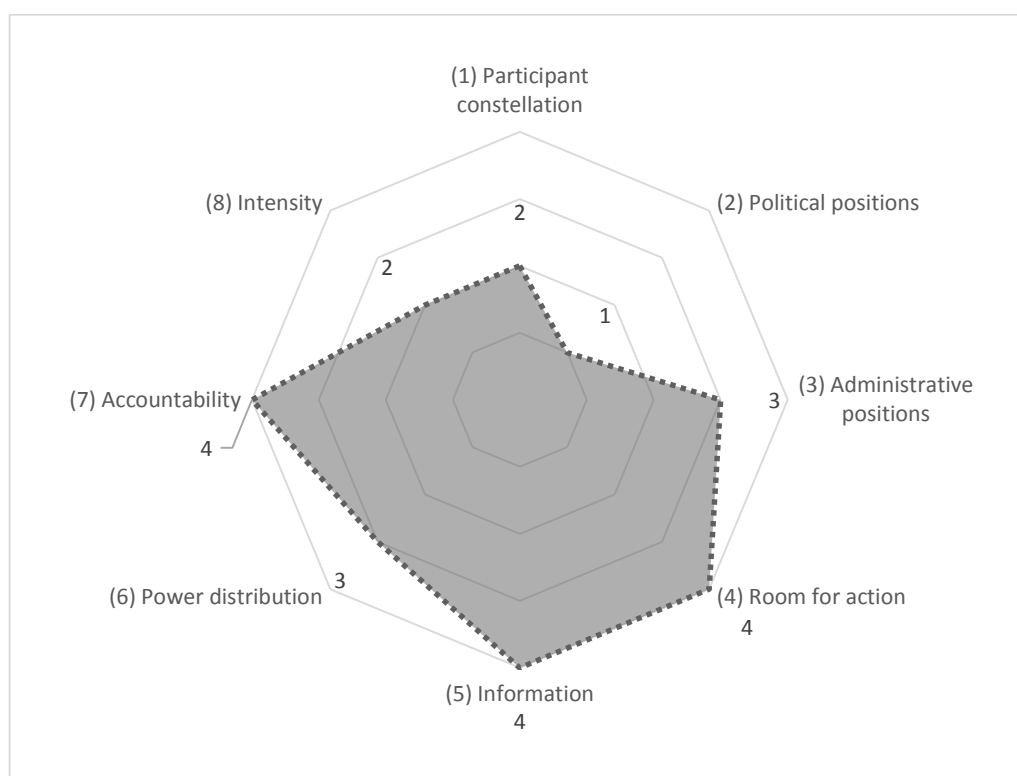
4.3.3.8. Intensity

While most coordination structures of otherwise independent action and joint planning were in place, many policy lines were not realized because of the interdependencies between actions and actors. Many final decisions depend on the installation of the Intersectoral Portal. Establishing Intersectoral Portal to indirectly accessible modules of youth care is key for IYC; yet this did not happen despite the decree deadline of 1/1/2008. This issue was salient and contested, because the Intersectoral Portal would affect the current division of tasks between the sectors and the corresponding interests. A participative decision making process was organized, but stalled several times, due to resistance from sectoral players. As most of the policy lines were strongly interlinked and the (non-)results achieved in one policy line affected the progress of others, cooperation, but not coordination, occurred (Van Tomme, Verhoest, Voets, & De Peuter, 2011).

4.3.4. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

The coordination arrangement of Integrated Youth Care can be described as loosely coupled (see Graph 4). The legend below scores all the different elements of the coordination arrangement. Although the policy program is based on a decree, and works with permanent coalitions between organizations to coordinate independent actions, the coordination arrangement is for the most part loose. The analysis shows that there is a mismatch between loose and tight coupling on different levels.

GRAPH 4: THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT DEPLOYED IN INTEGRATED YOUTH CARE



ELEMENT IAD FRAMEWORK		ANALYSIS	
(1)	Participant constellation	Permanent coalition	2 (tight)
(2)	Political positions	Unilateral coercive regulation	1 (very tight)
(3)	Administrative positions	Network governed	3 (loose)
(4)	Room for action	Statement	4 (very loose)
(5)	Information	Informal communication, with room to maneuver	4 (very loose)
(6)	Power distribution	Multiple participants, democratic decision-making	3 (loose)
(7)	Accountability	Dissemination and access to information – peer review	4 (very loose)
(8)	Intensity	Coordination of independent action	2 (tight)

First, the IYC case shows that reciprocal interdependent issues allow for loose coordination arrangements. Such an approach works if the participants recognize its necessity. Loose coordination, however, has its limits in reciprocal interdependent issues that touch sectoral and organizational interests. In this case, the intersectoral goals not only require intersectoral consultation but also (the change of) sectoral policy instruments. Implementing such far-reaching measures through a network mode, with voluntary implementation is, given their urgency, welcome and noble. Nevertheless, this network-like

approach mode cannot help to decide and implement policy measures that aim for fundamental changes in task allocations between sectors and organizations.

Second, in the case of reciprocal interdependent objectives the mix of loose coupling with tight aspects creates non-implementation and alienation. The loose approach was followed in almost all aspects, but a more hierarchical, top-down mode was chosen to deal with the network structures (namely the steering groups and networks at different levels). These networks bring together (semi-)autonomous partners from various sectors to develop IYC initiatives that fit the needs and concerns in each area, in a bottom-up way. The government, however, started to coordinate them hierarchically, defining in a top-down way the goals that networks should have and the activities they should pursue. This approach did not fit, according to the interviewees, because actors do not accept top-down command—in line with, for instance, Jessop (1997)—and, therefore, this ended in non-implementation. Furthermore, because of the top-down approach, IYC is insufficiently ‘owned’ by the six sectors; many actors consider it to be a ‘new’ seventh sector (interview 6) competing with or even overruling their sector. Sectors must be responsible and held accountable for the implementation of cross-sectoral programs, creating an embedded intersectoral practice instead of a separate field.

The case showed that the lack of political urgency and leadership led to unclear priorities and the absence of decisions. While IYC aims at creating linkages and coherence among six autonomous sectors, the IYC instruments were not linked to the coordination mechanisms and instruments already used within these sectors, i.e. the sectoral coordination instruments. As a result, the sectoral care organizations received separate and, at times, conflicting steering signals from the central level. On the one hand, they received horizontal coordination impulses of IYC (e.g. to draw up modules, to participate in networks, etc.). On the other hand, the traditional vertical coordination instruments in their sector did not focus on or refer to IYC objectives (and instead kept them focused on their services, target groups, and sectorally-defined result targets). The end goal of cross-sectoral collaboration, and, more importantly, how sectors should adapt their practices to achieve this should be made explicit and act as a ‘leidbild’ for the involved partners. Shared accountability, in particular, is crucial in (a field that requires) collaborative efforts. There was no clear allocation of accountabilities regarding the progress and success of the IYC reform and of the cross-sectoral collaboration. The top managers of the six involved administrations (department and agencies) were not held accountable by their minister or by parliament with regard to IYC. Moreover, there were no mechanisms to hold networks and steering groups accountable as platforms for joint decision making.

The focus of the policy issue does not seem to bring about a certain type of coupling in the coordination arrangement. Although Integrated Youth Care focuses on providing care to

clients, most discussions about its coordination focus on the internal structure of the government.

4.4. CONCLUSION — COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

This paragraph summarizes the cases with respect to the influence of the policy issue characteristics on the coordination arrangement. The third column of Table 20 provides an overview of the hypotheses and the fourth column presents the results, explained in detail below.

TABLE 20: RESULTS ON THE BASIS OF POLICY ISSUE CHARACTERISTICS

Hypothesis			Results
Political urgency	H1a. High	Tight arrangement	Data supports the hypothesis. High political urgency seems to tighten the arrangement (Austerity measures)
	H1b. Low	Loose arrangement	Mostly true. Loosens the arrangement, but also leads to no coordination (IYC/ Administrative simplification)
Inter-dependencies	H2a. Low	Tight arrangement	Data supports the hypothesis. In the case of low interdependencies the arrangement is tight, to prevent uncertainty (austerity measures)
	H2b. High	Loose arrangement	Data seems to support the hypothesis. But even though arrangement is loose, a form of tight coupling of the arrangement seems to be necessary to prevent deadlock (Integrated Youth Care)
Focus	H3a. Internal	Tight arrangement	Partially true, creates a precondition/impetus to deploy a tightly coupled arrangement
	H3b. External	Loose arrangement	Partially true, creates a precondition/impetus to deploy a loosely coupled arrangement

If a policy issue is urgent, the political attention for reaching the goals is, as a result, higher, which tightens the coordination arrangement. Political urgency is, according to the interviewees, needed to prioritize the issues. Especially in the Flemish government, where the ministers are the only principals, less political attention and urgency loosens the arrangement. Frequent ministerial turnover, risk-averse ministers, and a lack of political urgency in Integrated Youth Care led to deadlock. With few results after 10 years, the champions state that it is difficult to stay motivated. Furthermore, they explain that for those motivated people, adapting and attending meetings almost feels 'like a secondary job'. Interviewees stress that organizations stall some dossiers and do not voluntarily contribute or change without a ministerial decision or an executive order. This was, according to them, needed to expedite the process and commit to the necessary harsh decisions to overcome

sectoral and organizational interests. With the administrative simplification objective, interviewees feel that the political urgency is *that* low, that there is *de facto* no coupling, although there is *de jure* a highly structured and institutionalized arrangement. In the austerity measures, this also became apparent. The political urgency and short time horizon led to a situation that required fast decisions, which tightened the arrangement quickly. The urgency of the issue led to a strong establishment of a political champion, who has the authority to sanction organizations.

Second, let us look at the policy issue characteristic interdependencies. The influence of this policy issue characteristic is especially clear in the austerity measures and Integrated Youth Care. It seems that if there are interdependencies, either *high or low*, that they are dealt with through tight coupling, either during the decision-phase (*ex-ante*) or the adaptation-phase (*ex-post*). Most political and administrative actors assumed that the possible interdependencies in the austerity measures, when targeted cuts were announced, would lead to uncertainty and conflicts. These targeted cuts were unable to be effective because, according to the interviewees, both the political and administrative levels lacked the courage to commit to this. When the decision was left to the administration itself, so many conflicts arose that a proportional, across-the-board cut was chosen. Subsequently, uncertainty was reduced because all the involved administrators felt that all organizations were judged on the same results. Hence, the 'possible interdependencies' and subsequent uncertainty that could arise were 'tamed' through centralization, sanctions, and control in different forms. This is in line with Chisholm (1992) who states that policy makers assume that the best way to deal with interdependence is centralization and tight coupling. Reducing the uncertainty occurred *ex-ante* in the austerity measures, in the decision-making process. In Integrated Youth Care, and especially in the case of reciprocal interdependence, cooperation needs more intensive investment than just contributing some actions to a cross-cutting program. In fact, it needs extensive adaptation and alterations. Integrated Youth Care intersectoral goals not only require intersectoral but also (the change of) sectoral policy instruments and that shared accountability is crucial in (a field that requires) collaborative efforts. A form of tight coupling of the arrangement seems to be necessary to overcome the deadlock. In the administrative simplification objectives there are almost no dependencies. If there are actions, these are focus of the organization itself or related to compliance with the cross-cutting agreement. So, there it is really not a question of interdependencies but of non-coordination.

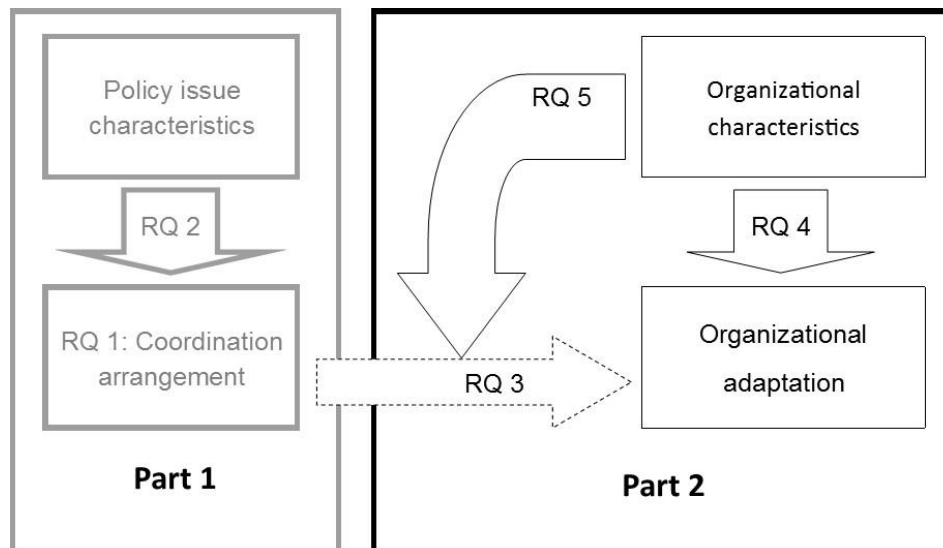
Third, let us consider the focus of the policy issue. Focus seems to be an impetus or a precondition for either tight or loose coupling. The limits for enforcing a tight coupled approach are more distinct if a policy issues has a more external focus. This can be explained by the political urgency of some policy issues. Ministers are focused on 'their' own

substantive policies, with which they can 'score'. Such a policy might impact the service delivery to citizens: for instance, a minister gives more leeway to establish participatory networks to consult citizens. This is clear from an example from administrative simplification. The RIA process is, according to the interviewees, too time-consuming for politicians. The tight approach that follows is only possible because the RIA is mainly an internal matter. Nearly all respondents who speak about administrative simplification explain that they have their own professional networks. In these networks, there are many ad-hoc consultations between policy implementers and dossier managers, who often do 'find each other' on operational targets and added value for the client/customer. They are, according to themselves, in closer consultation with the clients and organization, which brings about a loose arrangement to coordinate such cross-cutting policy initiatives. According to more than half of the respondents, a focus on core tasks, processes, citizens, and society might have led to more targeted cuts, instead of turf wars in the austerity measures. The difference in focus is not only mentioned with respect to the whole policy issue but also with respect to networks or collaborations. Sometimes there are two different champions with slightly different emphases when it comes to approaching the cross-cutting policy objective: for instance, the division between a focus on management and more policy-substantive matters that impede coordination. Coordinators, who have a generic helicopter view, and implementers, who know the substance of the policy and its relations to the grass roots, have different focuses in the dossiers. The former exhibit coordination and steering capacities, while the latter display information and implementation capacities. The former are, at the same time, responsible for monitoring what the latter see as administrative burdens.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

This chapter studies adaptation of ten organizations to three cross-cutting policy objectives under study. Organizational adaptation is the process in which organizations cope and weigh the environmental demands (e.g. the coordination arrangement) and adapt (or not) to comply with these demands (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 18). Focus lays in this chapter on adaptation of organizational-specific structures to cross-cutting policy objectives: (1.) organizational goals, (2.) monitoring systems, (3.) financial resources, and (4.) responsible staff members. This chapter constitutes part 2 (see Table 21) of the thesis and tries to answer three sub-questions regarding organizational adaptation.

TABLE 21: RESEARCH DESIGN



Contrary to chapter four, this chapter builds both a framework to study organizational adaptation and presents the analysis afterwards. The framework to study the coordination arrangements (described in chapter four) is offered in the theoretical framework. However, to reduce the complexity of this section, the framework and analysis are in this chapter combined.

The chapter is structured via the three sub-questions:

- RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*
- RQ 4: *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

- RQ 5: *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?*

The chapter ends with a discussion of the main results. In this discussion the results are compared to the hypotheses. This leads to a conclusion about which perspective can provide more insight in the organizational adaptation process, either the agency - or the stewardship perspective. Based on the agency and the stewardship perspective, three competing hypotheses - in relation to the three research questions - were formulated in the theoretical chapter. These hypotheses are shown in Table 22.

TABLE 22: HYPOTHESES CONCERNING ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

Research question	Concept	Agency perspective	Stewardship perspective
RQ 3	Coordination arrangement	H4a. Organizations under tightly coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly	H4b. Organizations under loosely coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly
RQ 4	Organizational characteristics	H5a. if organizations are close to the center of government (i.e. have low autonomy), of a large size and have a policy development task this will lead to high adaptation.	H5b. if organizations are further away from the center of government, of a smaller size, and have a policy implementation task this will lead to high adaptation.
RQ 5	Interaction of organizational characteristics and coordination arrangement	H6a. Being under tightly coupled coordination arrangements in combination with low autonomy, a large size and policy development as main task lead to high adaptation.	H6b. Being under loosely coupled coordination arrangements in combination with high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task lead to high adaptation.

5.1. WHAT DO *DE JURE* AND *DE FACTO* ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION MEAN?

Organizational adaptation is operationalized as the extent to which organizations structurally adapt *de jure* and *de facto* to cross-cutting policy objectives. This is based on four elements that refer to structural adaptation: (1.) incorporation of the goals, (2.) monitoring systems, (3.) financial resources, and (4.) responsible staff members.

5.1.1. *DE JURE* ADAPTATION TO CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

De jure adaptation is the extent to which organizations adapt their documents to comply with the cross-cutting policy objectives. This is based on the researchers' assessment of the organizational planning documents. We collected from each organization:

1. the multi-annual performance agreements from 2007-2010 and 2011-2015

2. the annual business plans from 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012
3. the annual reports from 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012

For more explanation about these instruments, see Annex 2. These documents help guarantee sound planning and evaluation at the organizational level. In the following paragraph we will present firstly ‘a simple’ measurement of de jure adaptation, and secondly an illustration of de jure adaptation.

5.1.1.1. Simple measurement of de jure adaptation

The documents were scored on the extent to which they refer to four elements of structural adaptation mentioned above, with a possible maximum score of 4. In Table 23 the ranking of the organizations is shown on this 5-point scale (ranging from zero to four) per coordination arrangement.

TABLE 23: DE JURE ADAPTATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONS TO THE THREE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

RANK	Tight coupling (austerity measures)		Mixed coupling (administrative simplification)		Loose coupling (Integrated Youth Care)	
1	Organization 1	4	Organization 1	3		
2	Organization 2	3	Organization 3	3		
3	Organization 3	3	Organization 8	3		
4	Organization 8	3	Organization 2	2		
5	Organization 5	3	Organization 5	1		
6	Organization 9	3	Organization 9	1	Organization 8	3
7	Organization 6	1	Organization 6	1	Organization 9	3
8	Organization 4	1	Organization 4	1	Organization 6	2
9	Organization 10	0	Organization 10	0	Organization 10	1
10	Organization 7	0	Organization 7	0	Organization 7	0

To give insight in how these scores were obtained, the next section shows the assessment of the first element of structural adaptation. This is the first indicator — of the four elements of structural adaptation — on which the rest of the chapter is based, i.e. the incorporation of the cross-cutting objective.

5.1.1.2. An illustration of de jure adaptation

When an organization makes a goal concrete in its own organizational planning documents this indicates that they make the cross-cutting objective ‘tangible’. Those organizations, which make the goals very ‘smart’, make them visible in the organization and are planning ex-ante how the goals will be reached. Others, who do not make goals concrete in their documents rather commence ‘unplanned’.

Smart refers to:

- *Specific* – the goal explains and targets an explicit area.
- *Measurable* – the goal quantifies an indicator or norm to which the organization can be held accountable.
- *Achievable* – the goal is well defined and clear enough to be achieved.
- *Realistic* – the goal states what results can realistically be achieved given available resources.
- *Timely* – the goal specifies when and with which paths the result(s) can be achieved.

All the organizational documents were scored on these elements on a scale from 0 to 1 (a mean was taken across the documents). In total organizations can reach a score of one, if it addresses all the smart elements fully. More explanation can be found in chapter three: methodology. In Table 24 a ranking is given of how concrete the organizations make the cross-cutting policy objectives. In the middle the mean across the organizations is shown. Above the mean, the organizations are situated which, compared to the mean, make the cross-cutting policy objectives smart to a large extent. In what will follow we will call these organizations having ‘huge plans’. Below the mean, organizations are ranked that, compared to the mean, do not make the goals smart. We will refer to these organizations as having ‘little plans’.

TABLE 24: SMARTNESS OF THE GOALS

RANK	Tight coupling		Mixed		Integrated Youth Care	
1	Organization 1	↑ Highly smart, above mean	Organization 1	↑ Highly smart, above mean	Organization 8	↑ Highly smart, above mean
2	Organization 2		Organization 3		Organization 9	
3	Organization 3		Organization 8		Organization 10	
4	Organization 8		Organization 2		Mean: 0,2	
5	Organization 5		Mean: 0,418		Organization 6	Less smart, below mean ↓
	Mean: 0,384		Organization 5	Less smart, below mean ↓	Organization 7	
6	Organization 9	Less smart, below mean ↓	Organization 9			
7	Organization 10		Organization 10			
8	Organization 6		Organization 6			
9	Organization 4		Organization 7			
10	Organization 7		Organization 4			

First of all, the ranking of organizations is about the same in each policy objective. Thus, organizations which make one cross-cutting policy objective smart, also make other objectives more concrete. This either means that they prioritize cross-cutting policy objectives, or that some organizations have the capacity to write thorough documents.

Secondly, some goals seem hard to make smart. The administrative simplification objectives are made most smart, compared to the other goals. The austerity measures approximately have the same mean. Goals like administrative simplification and austerity measures are most likely easier to quantify, compared to the goals of Integrated Youth Care. Two reasons might explain this: 1.) the goals do not go across the organizational borders and 2.) they concern budget, time and staff, which are easier to quantify.

5.1.2. DE FACTO ADAPTATION TO CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

De facto adaptation is the extent to which the organization adapts to the cross-cutting policy objectives, as perceived by the organizational linking pin in a face-to-face interview.¹⁷ In every organization, interviews were conducted with linking pins who are responsible for implementing the cross-cutting policy into their organization:

- 1 per organization for the austerity measures - 10 in total;
- 1 per organization for administrative simplification - 10 in total and;
- 2 per organization for Integrated Youth Care¹⁸, except for one organization - 9 in total.

In the following paragraph we will present firstly 'a simple' measurement of de facto adaptation, and secondly an illustration of de facto adaptation.

5.1.2.1. Simple measurement of de facto adaptation

The 'simple measurement' of de facto adaptation is the extent to which the organizational linking pins refers to the four elements of structural adaptation (mentioned before) in the interviews, with a possible maximum score of 4. In Table 25 the ranking of the organizations is shown on this 5-point scale per coordination arrangement. The 5-point scale was based on where the linking pin placed (either positive or negative) the Q-sort statements, and his/her explanation relating to:

1. Goals: "The expertise of our organization is large enough to translate the very vague objectives to concrete actions"
2. Monitoring: "In our organization the objective is part of the monitoring system, based on that we can take good management decisions"

¹⁷ This was based on where the linking pin placed the Q-sort statements relating to:

(1.) Goals: "The expertise of our organization is large enough to translate the very vague objectives to concrete actions" (2.) Monitoring: "In our organization the objective is part of the monitoring system, based on that we can take good management decisions" (3.) Financial resources: "We have linked budget to the cross-cutting goal" (4.) Responsible staff members: "We assigned the objective to a few staff-members, but they have other assignments as well". The interview transcripts were checked to validate the scores of the linking pin, on which we based the de facto scores.

¹⁸ This was done to ensure the diversity of cases, in terms coupling and organizational characteristics.

3. Financial resources: “We have linked budget to the cross-cutting objective”
4. Responsible staff members: “We assigned the objective to a few staff-members, but they have other assignments as well”

The interviews were all transcribed and coded, in order to validate the *de facto* scores. An overview of the interviews can be found in Annex 4.

TABLE 25: DE FACTO ADAPTATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONS TO THE THREE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

RANK	Tight coupling (austerity measures)		Mixed coupling (administrative simplification)		Loose coupling (Integrated Youth Care)	
1	Organization 3	4	Organization 3	3		
2	Organization 10	4	Organization 4	3		
3	Organization 1	3	Organization 5	3		
4	Organization 2	3	Organization 6	3		
5	Organization 5	3	Organization 8	2		
6	Organization 4	3	Organization 10	2	Organization 6	3
7	Organization 7	3	Organization 1	1	Organization 9	3
8	Organization 8	2	Organization 2	1	Organization 10	3
9	Organization 9	2	Organization 9	0	Organization 8	2
10	Organization 6	1	Organization 7	0	Organization 7	1

What we can conclude from this ranking is that *de facto* organizational adaptation fluctuates more strongly across cross-cutting policy objectives, compared to the *de jure* organizational adaptation. In other words, organizations adapt more strongly *de facto* to one cross-cutting objective, compared to another objective. This simple measurement only describes the scores on 4 Q-sort statements. These statements are part of the illustration which will be shown in the following paragraph, in which the linking pins had to sort 24 statements concerning organizational adaptation.

5.1.2.2. An illustration of *de facto* adaptation

This paragraph shows the analysis of the 29 interviews which were conducted with Q-methodology. Q-methodology is fully explained in the methodological chapter. In the interviews organizational linking pins had to sort 24 statements concerning organizational adaptation in a normal distribution (see Annex 5 for the statements and Annex 6 for the normal distribution grid). These were analyzed and the analysis resulted in a two distinct factors (see Table 26). This was concluded from the Eigen values. Factors which have eigenvalues of more than 1,00 were selected. The larger the eigenvalue, the more variance is explained by the factor (Du Plessis, 2005). The composite reliability lies for all the factors between .96 and .99, which is more than acceptable (Brown, 1980). The composite reliability of a factor depends on how many participants define it (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

TABLE 26: FACTOR CHARACTERISTICS

FACTORS	Factor 1	Factor 2
Eigen values	8.2	4.1
Number of defining respondents	16	7
Number of distinguishing statements	13	
Average relation Coefficient	0.8	0.8
Composite reliability	0.985	0.966
Standard Error of factor z-scores	0.124	0.186
% Explained variance	28	14

Table 27 presents how the 29 linking pins load on the factors. The individual factor loadings are correlations between the individual Q-sort and the factor. The grey cells indicate on which factor a linking pin loads. Participants who do not load significantly on any factor have viewpoints which cannot be pinpointed to one of the factors (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

TABLE 27: FACTOR LOADINGS OF THE INDIVIDUAL SORTINGS

Policy issue	Organization	Factor 1	Factor 2
Tight coupling (austerity measures)	10	0.61	0.47
	2	0.57	0.19
	6	0.01	0.65
	7	0.70	-0.01
	8	0.55	0.20
	9	0.34	0.37
	5	0.90	-0.05
	3	0.67	0.22
	1	0.70	0.13
	4	0.71	0.34
Mixed coupling (administrative simplification)	3	0.47	-0.09
	7	0.36	0.42
	2	0.11	0.39
	5	0.59	-0.03
	1	0.06	0.88
	6	0.47	0.26
	8	0.07	0.29
	4	0.77	0.07
	9	-0.25	0.57
	10	0.34	0.23
Loose coupling (Integrated Youth Care)	6	0.33	0.19
	7	-0.33	0.66
	6	0.70	-0.26
	10	0.06	0.19
	8	0.05	0.82
	9	0.81	0.11
	8	0.29	0.70
	10	0.52	-0.00
	9	0.56	0.47

Discourse 1 – High de facto adaptation: huge action

The first factor clusters sixteen respondents (see for an overview Table 27). Seven of the statements are distinguishing statements (marked with an asterisk in Table 28), which means that these statements are significantly different from what the group of respondents think, which load on the second factor. These respondents feel that talking about and attention from the top of the organization for cross-cutting policy objectives has a strong influence on how the organization adapts to the cross-cutting issue. In particular talking about problems and doubts of the staff is really important in times of uncertainty. The linking pins feel that the goals are not a myth in their organizational documents. Cross-cutting objectives are real actions for the organization, and therefore firmly anchored in the documents. Especially clear from this discourse is that these respondents do not feel small or vulnerable, but belief in the expertise of the organization to adapt to the goals and make them concrete. The organizational linking pins are positive about collaboration with others, to create added value and because it is necessary to avoid overlap. This explains why these organizations are labelled as delivering ‘huge action’.

TABLE 28: DISTINGUISHING ELEMENTS FACTOR 1: HUGE ACTION¹⁹

Factors	Huge action	Little action
It requires attention of the management: coaching staff, be ready to help with problems and doubts (*)	4	4
As management team you should be willing to discuss this objective on a regular basis	4	1
The expertise of our organization is large enough to translate the very vague objectives to concrete actions (*)	3	1
Currently, there are actually many good collaborations, why? Because we realize that we have too few employees, we should not reinvent the wheel (*)	3	-2
We act sometimes like we are vulnerable and in need of help, in order to obtain cooperation (*)	-3	-1
The jargon that is often associated with the goals, ... you cannot understand it (*)	-3	0
That cross-cutting policy objective is not really an action, that it is in our documents does not mean that we are very active (*)	-4	1
The cross-cutting objective is only marginally mentioned in our documents, as in "we contribute to ... ", but that is very ad-hoc (*)	-4	2

Discourse 2 – low de facto adaptation: little action

This second discourse clusters seven different respondents (see for an overview Table 27). Five different elements are distinguishing statements, and therefore significantly different from the first factor (marked with an asterisk in Table 29). These organizations have a hard time prioritizing cross-cutting policy objectives and are therefore labelled as delivering ‘little action’. According to these organizational linking pins, adapting in terms of time, budget, and

¹⁹ Asterisk (*) indicates significant difference with the other factors at $P < .01$

integrating the goals in the monitoring system is a struggle. The respondents point out that their organization does not link budget to the cross-cutting policy objectives, that these monitoring systems are not part of the monitoring and that they do not have enough staff to structurally adapt. The staff that is needed is not available because they have a lot on their to-do-list already, and for the cross-cutting policy objectives they have to put their efforts up a notch. However, these organizations do not prioritize their core-business or their clients above the cross-cutting issue. What these organizations more flexible and programmatically, for instance with horizontal teams is a solution to integrate the issues better.

TABLE 29: DISTINGUISHING ELEMENTS FACTOR 2: LITTLE ACTION

Factors	Huge action	Little action
It requires attention of the management: coaching staff, be ready to help with problems and doubts	4	4
I think our organization should be much more flexible and has to work programmatically (*)	0	4
You need to have staff in the organization who want to invest in it. For cross-cutting policy objectives they have to put it up a notch or do some things more explicit	2	3
We assigned the objective to a few staff-members, but they have other assignments as well	2	3
As an organization, you should only collaborate if it has a value for the customer/ client	-2	-3
In our organization the objective is part of the monitoring system, based on that we can take good management decisions	2	-3
You will find the cross-cutting policy objective everywhere in our operations, because it is a change of mentality	1	-4
We have linked budget to the cross-cutting objective	1	-4

5.1.3. COMBINING DE JURE AND DE FACTO ADAPTATION

From this point on, the 5-point scale is used, following from the simple *de facto* and *de jure* measurement. Just to recapture what we have described in the previous section, an organization can reach a score of 4 when it adapts fully, an 0 when it does not adapt at all. Non-adaptation or adapting on maximum 2 elements is called low adaptation. Adapting 3 of 4 organizational structural elements to the cross-cutting policy objectives is called high adaptation.

The combination of the *de jure* and *de facto* 5-point scales lead theoretically to four types of adaptation. These types are shown in Table 30. These types can be built through the insight that the Q-sort and the SMART-measurement provided, mentioned in paragraph 5.1.1.2 and 5.1.2.2 respectively. Table 30 shows these types, which are labelled with the names mentioned above.

TABLE 30: FOUR TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

DE FACTO ADAPTATION	HIGH	3 Little plans, huge action	Huge plans, huge action 4
	LOW	1 Little plans, little action	Huge plans, little action 2
		LOW	HIGH
		DE JURE ADAPTATION	

Little plans, little action

The first type of adaptation is called the 'little plans, little action' type (type 1 in Table 30). These organizations do not strongly adapt in their documents (*de jure*) nor strongly *de facto*. They do not strongly incorporate the cross-cutting policy objectives ex-ante in their documents, and rather commence 'unplanned'. They neither strongly adapt *de facto*, and are therefore – with the knowledge following from the Q-sort labelled as delivering *little action*. In this category the organizations are situated which adapt to a *low* extent to the cross-cutting policy objectives.

Huge plans, little action

Secondly, the organizations belonging to the category 'huge plans, little action' (type 2 in Table 30) adapt their documents strongly to incorporate the cross-cutting policy objectives (*high de jure*), and are therefore labelled as delivering 'huge plans'. However, this is not followed by *de facto* adaptation. The organizations which belong to this cluster are, based on the Q-sort referred to as having 'little action'. This process - in which organizations write about proposed actions, but do not implement them - can theoretically be called 'symbolic adaptation' (Christensen, Lægreid, et al., 2007, p. 82).

Little plans, huge action

Organizations situated in category three of adaptation (type 3 in Table 30) do not incorporate the goals highly in their documents (*de jure*), and are therefore referred to as having 'little plans'. They are proceeding without ex-ante planning in their documents about how they will reach the cross-cutting policy objectives. However, they do strongly adapt *de facto*, which makes them, based on the Q-sort factor organizations who deliver 'huge action'.

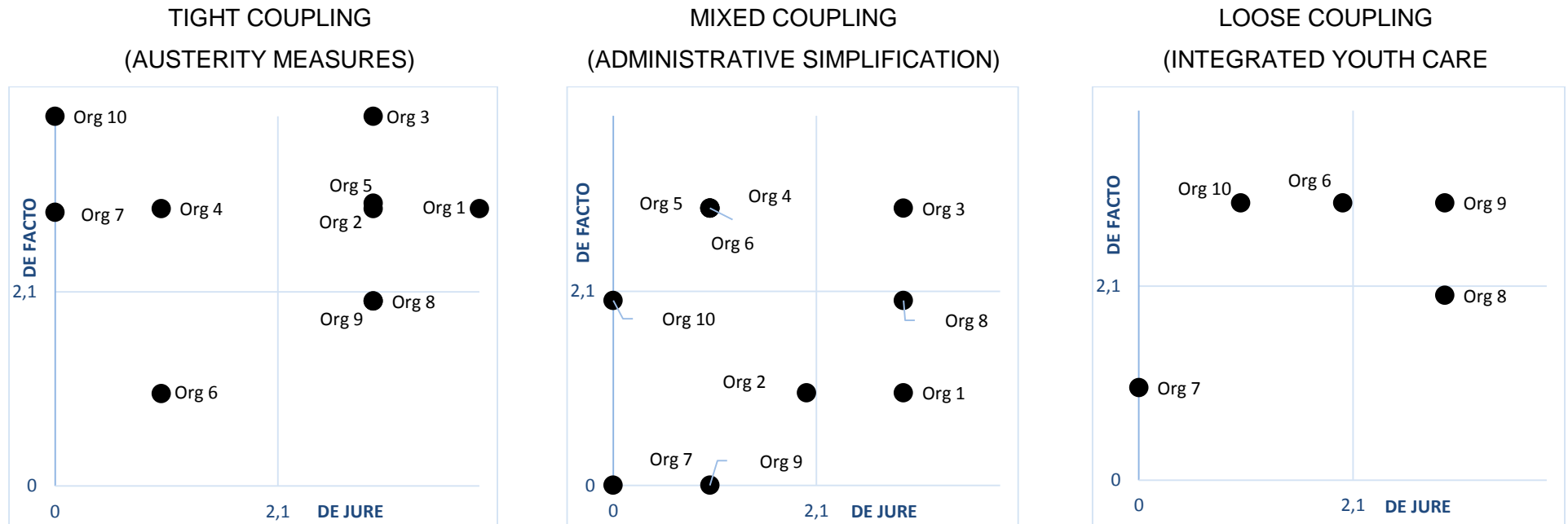
Huge plans, huge action

The organizations under the type 'huge plans, huge action' (type 4 in Table 30) are the organizations which adapt highly *de jure*, as well as highly *de facto*.

On the basis of these types, the organizations can be plotted in graphs, which are shown in Graph 5. On the y-axis the *de facto* adaptation, and on the x-axis the *de jure* adaptation. These graphs clearly show how many organizations are in which quadrant (i.e. type of adaptation). The organizations which correspond with high or low *de jure* adaptation (in Graph 5) match the complex *de jure* measurement about the SMART measure, except for three cases (organization 9, austerity measures, organization 2, administrative simplification, and organization 10, Integrated Youth Care). Therefore, the organizations which adapt highly *de jure* are labelled as delivering 'huge plans', based on the knowledge following from the SMART measure. The organizations which adapt low *de jure* are labelled, as delivering: 'little plans'. Organizations which fall in category high or low *de facto* adaptation (in Graph 5) match exactly with the two types that can be distinguished from the Q-sort analysis, except for one organizational linking pin (respondent 35 – organization 8 - talking about the austerity measures). Therefore, the organizations which adapt highly *de facto* are labelled as delivering 'huge action'. Organizations which adapt low *de facto* adaptation are labelled, based on the knowledge stemming from the Q-sort analysis, as delivering: 'little action'.

What is clear from Graph 5 is that organizations are not always found in the same quadrant. It could be that the coordination arrangement has an influence on the organizational adaptation process. Unraveling the patterns which lead to either low or high adaptation is the object of study of the following paragraphs.

GRAPH 5: ADAPTATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONS UNDER DIFFERENT FORMS OF COUPLING



5.2. RQ 3: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE DEGREE OF COUPLING OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT EXPLAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH ORGANIZATIONS ADAPT?

With the knowledge gathered from the SMART-measure and Q-sort, which lead to four types of adaptation, the researcher can dive deeper into the organizational adaptation process. In what will follow, organizational adaptation will refer to the four types of adaptation, based on the four elements referring to structural adaptation. This paragraph studies the extent to which organizations adapt under different coordination arrangements to find an answer to the third research question (RQ 3): *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?* Chapter 4 described three different coordination arrangements, either tight or loose. Three different arrangements were distinguished:

1. A tight arrangement (austerity measures)
2. A mixed arrangement (administrative simplification)
3. A loose arrangement (Integrated Youth Care)

In Table 31 the structural adaptation of the organizations is shown, under different coordination arrangements. As shown in Table 31, under a tight coordination arrangement, a small majority of the organizations has 'huge plans, and take huge actions'. The distribution is almost the opposite in the case of mixed coupling. Under mixed coupling, a small majority of the organizations is situated in the low adaptation quadrant: 'little plans, little action'. Under loose coupling the organizations are quite evenly distributed among the categories of adaptation.

TABLE 31: EXTENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

	Little plans, little action	Huge plans, little action	Little plans, huge action	Hugh plans, huge action	Total
	Low adaptation ←————→ high adaptation				
Tight coupling	10% (n=1)	20% (n=2)	30% (n=3)	40% (n=4)	10 organizations
Mixed coupling	40 % (n=4)	20% (n=2)	30% (n=3)	10% (n=1)	10 organizations
Loose coupling	20% (n=2)	20% (n=2)	40 % (n=2)	20% (n=2)	5 organizations

Although Table 31 gives some indications about which coordination arrangements lead to the highest extent of adaptation, the patterns are not entirely clear. Based on the agency and stewardship perspective two hypotheses were formulated, respectively H4a and H4b, to explain the extent of adaptation. Based on the agency perspective on organizational adaptation the expectation is that tight coupling works best to get organizations to adapt to cross-cutting policy. The data gives more support for this hypothesis, H4a — based on the agency perspective — than for H4b. However, the data is not straightforward. Even under the tightly coordination arrangement there is a fair share of organizations that fall into other adaptation categories, i.e. adapt to a low extent. Under loose and mixed coordination arrangements there are organizations which are high adapters. So, it could be that the stewardship perspective could explain a share of organizations as well.

An explanation for high or low adaptation can probably be found in other factors than solely the type of coordination arrangement. For instance, the type of organization, i.e. the organizational characteristics, might play a role as well. In the next paragraphs an analysis is made about which combinations of organizational characteristics lead to either low or high adaptation.

5.3. RQ 4: WHICH ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS EXPLAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH ORGANIZATIONS ADAPT?

The analysis presented in the last section did not lead to clear conclusions. When looking into the organizational adaptation process the question may arise how the differences can be explained. The organizational characteristics of the organizations might lead to an explanation of the differences in structural adaptation.

5.3.1. ADAPTATION PER ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC

If the organizations are split up in their organizational characteristics, the variation is as can be seen in Graph 6. Per organizational characteristic, the organizations are split up in two sets; large - small, high autonomy - low autonomy and policy development – policy implementation.

First of all, let us look at the organizational characteristic size. A clear majority of the large organizations adapt themselves de facto 'to a large extent', with about 40 per cent of the large organizations delivering 'little plans, huge action' and one third of the large organizations delivering 'huge plans, huge action'. Although small organizations appear in each quadrant, one third of that group is delivering 'little plans, little action', being the lowest extent of adaptation.

Secondly, let us consider the autonomy of the organizations. Most organizations with low autonomy are situated in the category of low *de jure* adaptation, with one third of them showing also low *de facto* adaptation ('little plans, little action'), and one third high *de facto* adaptation ('little plans, huge action'). The largest group of organizations with high autonomy (40 per cent) is situated in the 'huge plans, little action', but somewhat less than one third is delivering 'little plans, huge action'.

The third characteristic is the policy task of the organizations. Most organizations with a policy development task seem to be organizations which adapt *de facto*, they can be situated in the 'little plans, huge action' and 'huge plans, huge action' categories. This seems different compared to the organizations with a policy implementation task, they are divided proportionally over the adaptation categories.

As can be seen in Graph 6, the patterns are not very clear. The differences are between the groups of organizations with a specific organizational characteristic falling in the different quadrants are not significant²⁰, and therefore have to be interpreted with care. These unclear patterns might be due to the interaction of the organizational characteristics in their effect on organizational adaptation. In order to test this, we now turn to fsQCA-analyses.

²⁰ A two-sample t test and a Kruskal-Wallis equality-of-populations rank test were executed to see whether level of adaptation differs among the organizations with different characteristics. These tests did not show any significant results.

GRAPH 6: ADAPTATION PER ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC

SIZE (n = 25, small: 12, large: 13)		AUTONOMY (n = 25, low autonomy: 15, high autonomy: 10)		POLICY TASK (n = 25, policy development: 5, policy implementation: 20)	
High de facto	Little plans, huge action Organizations: 8 Small: 3 Large: 5	Huge plans, huge action Organizations: 6 Small: 2 Large: 4	High de facto	Little plans, huge action Organizations: 8 Low autonomy: 5 High autonomy: 3	Huge plans, huge action Organizations: 6 Policy development: 2 Policy implementation task: 6
	Little plans, little action Organizations: 6 Small: 4 Large: 2	Huge plans, little action Organizations: 5 Small: 3 Large: 2		Low de facto	Little plans, little action Organizations: 6 Policy development: 1 Policy implementation: 5
Low de jure		Low de jure		Low de jure	
High de jure		High de jure		High de jure	

5.3.2. A QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS TO UNRAVEL HOW ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS INTERACT

Splitting the organizations up in their characteristics, like the last section did, did not lead to clear patterns. It could be the case that there are different patterns at the same time present to explain organizational adaptation. To unravel if specific combinations of different organizational characteristics lead to high or low adaptation, a Fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis is applied (see for more explanation chapter 3: methodology).

Fuzzy-set QCA relies on Boolean algebra and needs cases to be disentangled in series of conditions. This enables the researcher to compare the cases in a systematic and formal way. QCA follows a causes-of-effects stance, rather than an effects-of-causes position. The latter is typical for statistical approaches. In other words, QCA unravels individual outcomes and the paths leading to them, statistical approaches place emphasis on the average effect of a particular variable in a larger dataset (Vis, 2012). Fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (FsQCA) works as follows:

1. Preparing the data set

FsQCA requires the operationalization of conditions (comparable with an independent variable in statistics) and outcomes (comparable with a dependent variable in statistics) in binary terms. Conditions or outcomes assigned a score of 1 to .5 should be read as 'present' (indicated with a ●), while conditions with a score below 0.5 are 'absent' (indicated with a ○). 'Present' and 'absent' should not to be strictly interpreted. They mean large, small, high, low, etc. When the data is 'calibrated', i.e. dichotomized, the analysis can start. In Table 32 the calibration of the conditions and the outcome can be found. How the organizational characteristics interact (with the coordination arrangement) and how they link with the extent of adaptation is a typical FsQCA question.

TABLE 32: CALIBRATION OF THE CONDITIONS AND OUTCOMES

Condition	Fuzzy value	Meaning
High autonomy	1 = full membership in the set	Public law agencies with a governing board
	.67 = more in than out the set	Public law agencies
	.33 = more out than in the set	Departmental agencies
	0 = fully out of the set	Departments
Large organization	1 = full membership in the set	> 901 FTE
	.67 = more in than out the set	350 – 900 FTE
	.33 = more out than in the set	61-349 FTE
	0 = fully out of the set	0-60 FTE
Policy coordination task	1 = full membership in the set	Policy development organizations
	0 = fully out of the set	Policy implementing organizations
Strong coupling	1 = full membership in the set	Tight coupling
	.56 = more in than out the set	Mixed coupling
	0 = fully out of the set	Loose coupling

Outcome	Fuzzy value	Meaning
High de jure/ De facto adaptation ²¹	1 = full membership in the set	4 elements of structural adaptation
	.75 = more in than out the set	3 elements of structural adaptation
	.45 = almost in the set	2 elements of structural adaptation
	0.25 = more out than in the set	1 element of structural adaptation
	0 = fully out of the set	0 elements of structural adaptation
High adaptation (4 types)	1 = fully out of the set	Huge plans, huge action
	.67 = more in than out the set	Little plans, huge action
	.33 = more out than in the set	Huge plans, little action
	0 = fully out of the set	Little plans, little action

2. The truth table and the analysis²²

FsQCA is a set-theoretic method, which urges to describe cases as configurations. A configuration refers to a combination of conditions and an outcome. A configuration is also called 'a path'. An example of a configuration or path is:

Presence of high autonomy * (and) presence of being a large organization (size) ->
(leads to) presence of high adaptation.

FsQCA is intended to reveal the minimal set of conditions that are present or absent when an outcome is present or absent (Rihoux & De Meur, 2009). The list of configurations ('the cases') allows the researcher to control for contradictory configurations. These are configurations of conditions that in some instances correspond with the presence of the outcome, and in other instances with an absence of the outcome, and therefore are not unambiguously leading to an explanation. The core of the QCA analysis, is the minimization process. It involves a systematic and pairwise comparison of configurations of each case in order to uncover the regularities in the data. *"If two configurations differ in only one condition, but show the same outcome, this particular condition can be eliminated"* (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p. 105). Repeating this minimization-process until no minimization is possible anymore, results in an overview of paths, which do not longer include redundant conditions.

²¹ Because the measurement is based on a 5-point scale, an organization can reach a score of 4 when it adapts fully, an 0 when it does not adapt at all. Hence, five sub-categories. Non-adaptation or adapting on maximum 2 elements is called low adaptation. Adapting 3 of 4 organizational structural elements to the cross-cutting policy objectives is called high adaptation. While 2 is the median, but in the set low adapting organizations it is almost in the set (a border case).

²² In most truth tables there are some logically possible combinations of conditions without empirical cases. These non-observed empirical cases are called 'logical remainders. However, since the organizations where selected to differ on all conditions in most analyses which logical remainders were rare and therefore 'limited diversity' is minimal.

3. Interpretation of the solution paths

Relations are expressed in terms of necessity and sufficiency in FsQCA. A condition is necessary when it is always present whenever the outcome is present: $X \leftarrow Y$ (i.e. if we see a certain outcome, the condition is in the path). A sufficient configuration can be schematically explained as $X \rightarrow Y$, i.e. a (combination of) condition(s) leads to a certain outcome. The consistency cut-off was set at 0.80 for the analysis of sufficient conditions and at 0.90 for necessary conditions. All the results in this chapter present sufficient conditions²³. In the analyses no necessary conditions were found²⁴. Two parameters are used to analyze sufficient configurations; coverage and consistency.

1. The higher the coverage score, the higher the percentage of cases that exhibit a given combination of conditions and the outcome.
2. The higher a consistency score, the higher the proportion of the cases consistent with a certain outcome. In other words, the higher the percentage of organizations which show that certain characteristics lead to a specific outcome.

If the solution consistency and/or coverage scores drop below for instance .75, this points out that the 'model' - i.e. the conditions and the outcome - is badly chosen. This might derive from including irrelevant conditions or missing crucial conditions (Legewie, 2013). If consistency is high, but the coverage low, the solution is less interesting because the path describes only a few cases. In contrast, if the coverage is high, but the consistency low the solution is not strong enough to establish a causal relation. However, the empirical significance of a path (shown by its coverage) is not equivalent to its theoretical relevance. Some paths, which include many cases (high coverage) can be theoretically uninteresting or even trivial (Schneider & Wagemann, 2010, p. 20). Schneider and Wagemann (2010) therefore recommend not only to focus on a minimum value of consistency, and not to hide cases that deviate from expectancy.

In what will follow:

- Black circles: ● – indicate the presence of a condition
- White circles: ○ - indicate the absence of a condition

²³ The paths present the complex solution. 1.) As this does not include assumptions on logical remainders and 2.) the automatically obtained parsimonious solution is the same as the complex solution. This means that the paths cannot automatically be minimized any further.

²⁴ The consistency cut-off was set at 0.80 for the analysis of sufficient conditions and at .9 for necessary conditions.

5.3.2.1. How interaction of organizational characteristics lead to de jure adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives

Emphasis is in this paragraph on research question four (RQ 4), which focuses on the organizational characteristics which can explain the adaptation process. Following the set-up of this chapter, *de jure* adaptation is analyzed first. Thus, this paragraph studies the combinations of organizational characteristics which lead to either high or low adaptation of the organizational documents (de jure). The analysis results in one path leading to *high de jure* adaptation, as well as a path leading to *low de jure* adaptation. The paths are shown in Table 33.

TABLE 33: PATHS LEADING TO HIGH AND LOW DE JURE ADAPTATION

DE JURE ADAPTATION ²⁵		
Conditions	HIGH ²⁶	LOW ²⁷
High autonomy	O	O
Large size	●	O
Policy development task	●	●
Raw coverage	0.19	0.17
Unique coverage	0.19	0.17
Consistency	0.93	0.90
Total number of cases	2/25	3/25
solution coverage	0.19	0.17
solution consistency	0.93	0.90

High de jure adaptation: Being a large organization, with low autonomy and policy development as a main task leads to high de jure adaptation. The solution path only covers two organizations, being two departments, which fall into the category ‘huge plans, huge action’. Departments typically have policy development as a main task which leads to extensive documents in which they pay attention to the cross-cutting policy objectives. Being a department is not enough, the organization needs to have certain size to really incorporate the cross-cutting objective in their documents. This is stressed by one of the organizational linking pins of an organization belonging to this cluster. Monitoring and evaluation are, mainly because of the policy developmental task of these departments, strongly structurally embedded in the documents: *“we finally classified in our documents everything at the micro level: 220 processes, budgets, we appointed FTE on it,...”* (Respondent 30).

²⁵ ● – indicate the presence of a condition, O indicate the absence of a condition

²⁶ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.93) to the outcome of interest.

²⁷ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.80) to the outcome of interest.

Low de jure adaptation: Being a small organization with a development task and low autonomy leads to low de jure adaptation. This path is covered by three departments. One department falls in the category ‘little plans, little action’ and two departments in the ‘little plans, huge action’ category. These organizations do not pay much attention to the cross-cutting policy objectives in their documents. Being small might be a reason why these organizations do not incorporate the objectives. According to the linking pin of one of these organizations, its organization is a master in creating vague goals, but at the same time it initiates concrete actions. He/she explains why the objective is not incorporated. The cross-cutting issue had to cope for a long time with an absent political leader, and: “*currently there is no money. In other words, you are expected to implement those actions with the resources you already have*”. This is according to the respondent very difficult (Respondent 49).

The paths shown above consistently lead to either *low* or *high* de jure adaptation. Together, these paths explain all the five departments in the dataset. The condition, which differs between the paths explaining high and low adaptation, is size. Being small leads to low *de jure* adaptation, being large to high *de jure* adaptation, in combination with other factors. The paths do not explain the organizations with a policy implementation task. Apparently, there is no consistent pattern to explain de jure adaptation of organizations with a policy implementation task.

5.3.2.2. How interaction of organizational characteristics lead to de facto adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives

The sufficient conditions in terms of organizational characteristics for *de facto* adaptation are presented in the paragraph underneath. In other words, this analysis focusses on the combinations of organizational characteristics which lead to either high or low *de facto* adaptation. Table 34 shows the two paths leading to *high de facto adaptation* and one path leading to *low de facto adaptation*.

TABLE 34: PATHS LEADING TO HIGH AND LOW DE FACTO ADAPTATION

DE FACTO ADAPTATION ²⁸			
	High ²⁹		Low ³⁰
Conditions	PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3
High autonomy	O		O
Large size		●	O
Policy development task	●	O	O
Raw coverage	0.25	0.51	0.43
Unique coverage	0.25	0.51	0.43
Consistency	0.70	0.68	0.81
Total number of cases	5/25	10/25	5/25
solution coverage	0.75		0.43
solution consistency	0.69		0.81

High de facto adaptation

PATH 1: Being an organization with low autonomy and policy development as main task leads to high de facto adaptation. Like de jure adaptation, this path is covered by departments, and more specifically, all five departments of the sample. The solution consistency of this paths is a bit low, which indicates a contradictory case. When going back to the dataset, it reveals that one department adapts *de facto* low. Although close to the minister and being a department, one organization does not adapt *de facto* high, though other organizations with the same characteristics do (see path 1 - Table 34). The organizational linking pin explains that the austerity measures can be easily incorporated in the organization. Although small, the organization has leeway to absorb the staff reduction and budget cuts easily. The main reason why this organization does not adapt is, according to the linking pin, the fact that objective is not yet a focal point for the top management. The linking pin explains that proposals which are relatively easy to implement, “*which will cost us less money and save a ton work, are not picked up by the management*” (respondent 33). This organization shows that administrative leadership is important to prioritize cross-cutting objectives.

One of the linking pins of the departments which are explained by the path stresses that cross-cutting policy objectives are internally within the department a clear interest. The minister stipulates this engagement. As stated by the respondent, numbers to report about cross-cutting policy objectives are easy to manipulate, but do not say a lot about the real implementation. This linking pin especially mentions the policy development task of his/her organization as an important factor for understanding a high level of de facto organizational

²⁸ ● – indicate the presence of a condition, O indicate the absence of a condition

²⁹ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.80) to the outcome of interest.

³⁰ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.81) to the outcome of interest.

adaptation. This brings about, according to him/her, a totally different view on cross-cutting policy objectives compared to the tasks of agencies, referring to a mentality to look for overarching elements in policy implementation, and issues related to co-ordination (Respondent 44).

PATH 2: Being a large organization with policy implementation as a main task leads to high *de facto* adaptation. The solution consistency of this path is a bit low, so the proof to make a causal argument is not too strong. This cluster of organizations contains ten departmental agencies, as well as semi-autonomous agencies. Four out of ten cases contradict the pattern, they do not show high *de facto* adaptation. One of the organizational linking pins attributes this to the absence of political leadership and attention. He/she explains that the organization is not adapting to the administrative simplification objective, because:

“if there is a new regulatory initiative [...] a RIA should be your starting point. In practice this is rarely the case because there is often political pressure to quickly do some thing about a particular problem, and then they start to draw up a proposal for new regulation and write the RIA ex-post. On the political level there are certain predetermined ideas for new regulation which block the ‘normal process’” (Respondent 38).

One of the organizations which does belong the path, especially embeds the monitoring and evaluation strongly in the organization. The high *de facto* adaptation is triggered, according to the linking pin, by the political urgency of the issue (respondent 28).

Low *de facto* adaptation

PATH 3: Small organizations with low autonomy and which have policy implementation as their main task *de facto* adapt low. All five organizations belonging to this cluster are departmental agencies. One of the respondents of this organization refers remarkably often to the small size of the organization. He/she contemplates that most of the work on cross-cutting policy objectives, is not done as it should be: *“it is done, de facto without additional funding, structures etc.... anyway if you consider our size, a small entity must simply work flexible. Often we work with project teams, there are a number of people are clustered together to work on these issues”* (Respondent 29). This is an important quote because it underlines that there is a lot of *de facto* implementation without any change in organizational structures. This points to the importance of combining *de facto* and *de jure* adaptation.

It seems easier to find patterns to explain *de facto* adaptation, than paths to explain *de jure* adaptation. Although two of the paths contain contradictory cases, the paths explain a big share of organizations. Together, these paths explain twenty of the twenty-five cases in the dataset. Biggest difference between the paths explaining high and low adaptation, seems to be again the size of the organization. The last path, and especially the quote made a strong point for combining *de jure* and *de facto* adaptation. The next paragraph will analyze the four types of adaptation.

5.3.2.3. Combining de jure and de facto adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives: four types/degrees of adaptation

The analysis presented in this paragraph focusses on the combinations of organizational characteristics which lead to either high or low organizational adaptation (according to the types defined in Table 30). The sufficient conditions for *the four types* of adaptation are presented in the paragraph underneath. The analysis of the combined measure, in which de jure and de facto are combined leads to only one path explaining high adaptation.

TABLE 35: PATHS LEADING TO HIGH AND LOW ADAPTATION

The four types of adaptation ³¹		
	High	Low
Conditions	PATH 1	
High autonomy	O	No solution paths
Large size	●	
Policy development task	●	
Raw coverage	0.15	
Unique coverage	0.15	
Consistency	0.86	
Total number of cases	2/25	
solution coverage	0.15	
solution consistency	0.89	

High adaptation

PATH 1: Large organizations with low autonomy and policy development as their main task do highly adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives in terms of delivering ‘huge plans, and huge actions’. This path is referring to two organizations, being two large departments.

Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.86) to the outcome of interest. ● – indicate the presence of a condition, O indicate the absence of a condition

The other departments in our sample, those with a small size, are not explained by this path. One of the linking pins of the two large departments explains that its organization aligns the goals, appoints champions and monitors and evaluates the progress of the cross-cutting policy objectives. Making the goals very explicit and concrete is according to the linking pin not a challenge for the organization. The cross-cutting policy objectives are also *de facto* fully integrated and established in this organization. Next, to adapting internally, this organization is involved in different bottom-up networks which work on the cross-cutting policy objectives (Respondent 40).

5.3.3. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS: HOW ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS EXPLAIN ADAPTATION TO CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

In the preceding paragraphs, we studied how organizational characteristics explain the organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives. As can be included from these analyses, the size of an organization seems to be a good indicator to explain if an organization will adapt itself or not. Being large leads in all the paths presented above (in combination with other conditions) to high adaptation. This is also reflected by the interviews, many of the interviewees address the capacity or the time needed to spend on the cross-cutting policy objectives, which is greater in large organizations. If *de facto* adaptation is analyzed, a policy development task (in combination with other factors) seems to lead to strong adaptation, irrespective of the size of the organization. High autonomy appears in no path, and is redundant in explaining organizational adaptation. Low autonomy is present in many paths, both explaining high and low adaptation. Single conditions do not seem to be conclusive to explain organizational adaptation. From the agency perspective the hypothesis was derived that organizations with low autonomy, a large size, and policy development as their main task (hypothesis H5a) would adapt to the strongest extent. The data seems to support this hypothesis.

5.4. RQ 5: INTERACTION OF THE COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT (TIGHTLY OR LOOSELY COUPLED) WITH THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

In this paragraph the analysis focuses on which types of organizations (in terms of organizational characteristics) do most strongly adapt to specific coordination arrangements in terms of their degree of coupling (tight, mixed or loose coupling). The paragraph tries to find an answer on research question five (RQ 5): *how does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?* In other words, does it matter if organizations with different characteristics are subjected to a tightly or loosely coupled

coordination arrangement? The same organizational characteristics are taken into account as in the analysis above, with addition of the different types of coordination arrangements³².

5.4.1. HOW INTERACTION OF COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS LEAD TO DE JURE ADAPTATION TO CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

In this paragraph the sufficient conditions for *de jure* adaptation are presented. This analysis focusses on the interaction of the coordination arrangement and the organizational characteristics, to explain high or low adaptation of the organizational documents (de jure). One path leading to high de jure adaptation, as well as three paths leading to low de jure adaptation can be distinguished. The paths are shown in Table 36.

TABLE 36: HIGH AND LOW DE JURE ADAPTATION, INTERACTION WITH COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

DE JURE ADAPTATION ³³				
	HIGH ³⁴	LOW ³⁵		
Conditions	PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4
High autonomy	○	○	○	●
Large size	●	○		●
Policy development task	●	●	○	○
Strong coupling	●		○	
Raw coverage	0.16	0.17	0.31	0.40
Unique coverage	0.16	0.17	0.10	0.18
Consistency	0.92	0.90	0.91	0.79
Total number of cases	2/25	3/25	2/25	5/25
solution coverage	0.16	0.67		
solution consistency	0.92	0.83		

High de jure adaptation

PATH 1: Large organizations with low autonomy and policy development as main task, under tightly coupled coordination arrangement adapt de jure to a high extent. This path is covered by two departments, which both belong to the cluster 'huge plans, huge action'. Compared to all the other organizations one of these two is according to the document

³² 'Coupling' is operationalized as : 1 = Tight coupling - full membership in the set, .56 = Mixed coupling - more in than out the set, 0 = Loose coupling - fully out of the set

³³ ● – indicate the presence of a condition, O indicate the absence of a condition

³⁴ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.92) to the outcome of interest.

³⁵ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.80) to the outcome of interest.

analysis adapting most strongly to cross-cutting objectives. Apart from their own *de facto* initiatives, the organization just wants to comply *de jure* with what the administrative champions want from the organization: “*there is a particular list of numbers which should be updated annually [...] this numeral exercise is not relevant, but we do it anyway*” (respondent 40).

Low de jure adaptation

PATH 2: Being a small organization with low autonomy and policy development as a main task leads to a low level of de jure adaptation. The three organizations, which belong to this cluster of organizations, are departments. For this cluster of organizations, the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely) proves to be redundant in explaining the organizational adaptation. One of the interviewees of this cluster is skeptical about the organizational contribution to cross-cutting policy objectives. According to the interviewee, the staff of his/her organization will never be able to have time to work on the cross-cutting policy objectives. This is partially attributed to its small size, but also because the added value of reporting about cross-cutting policy objectives is not always seen by the organization. Many of the cross-cutting policy objectives that come from the center are perceived as ‘numeral exercises’, which does not say anything about *de facto* implementation (Organization 33).

PATH 3: Organizations with low autonomy and which have policy implementation as their main task do adapt de jure to a low extent, if they are loosely coordinated. This cluster contains two departmental agencies. As an example, one of the organizational linking pins explains that his/her organization does not adapt strongly to cross-cutting objectives in its documents, but these objectives are slightly interwoven in the existing policies which the organization implements. The intensity of the co-operation and the final results largely depend – according to this linking pin – on whether people can ‘find’ each other and can create added value, as well as on whether individual employees in the organization are willing to collaborate (Respondent 54).

PATH 4: Large organizations with low autonomy and implementation as their main task adapt de jure to a low extent. The way of coupling proves to be redundant in this cluster of organizations. The cluster contains five semi-autonomous agencies. Inside of his/her organization, one of the respondents notices a lot of fragmentation. The linking pin explains as an illustration that the largest unit in the organization is very much on its own, because of the amount of money and the mandates it has. The organization is, as stated by the respondent, very specialized, and therefore strongly vertically oriented: “*while the challenges*

we face demand that we cooperate. That is why we try to introduce project work and horizontal groups". The organization decided in 2014 to introduce a part about cross-cutting policy objectives or collaborative efforts in their planning documents in order to demand attention for these issues. He/she thinks that the larger the organization, the harder it is for the organizational management to see the added value of collaborating with other organizations, because the organization has all the necessary capacity internally. The added value of collaboration is easier found and seen by smaller organizations (Respondent 42).

The analyses above showed that adding the coordination arrangement to the analysis is improving the 'model'. The paths are now consistent, and half of the organizations can be explained by the four conditions. While being large in previous analyses was only present in the paths leading to high adaptation, being large (in combination with other conditions) leads also to low adaptation. Especially if combined with high autonomy (the only path in this whole chapter where this condition turns up). It could be that these large organizations have a hard time to see the added value, because they are at a (legal) distance from the center of government. Furthermore, it seems that a linking pin has, in such a large organization, a hard time convincing others internally to collaborate on the cross-cutting objectives. This is validated by the interviews (see quote path 3). A tight coordination arrangement is (combined with other conditions) present in the path leading to high adaptation. A loose coordination arrangement appears in one of the paths leading to low organizational adaptation.

5.4.2. HOW INTERACTION OF COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS LEAD TO DE FACTO ADAPTATION TO CROSS-CUTTING POLICY OBJECTIVES

The sufficient conditions for *de facto* adaptation are presented in the paragraph underneath and shown in Table 37. First, the paths leading to high *de facto* adaptation are described. Afterwards, we present the paths leading to low *de facto* adaptation. This analysis focusses on the interaction of the coordination arrangement and the organizational characteristics, to explain high or low *de facto* adaptation.

TABLE 37: HIGH AND LOW DE FACTO ADAPTATION, INTERACTION WITH COORDINATION
ARRANGEMENT

DE FACTO ADAPTATION ³⁶				
	HIGH ³⁷			LOW ³⁸
Conditions	PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4
High autonomy	○	○	○	
Large size	●		○	
Policy development task		○	●	○
Strong coupling	●	●	○	○
Raw coverage	0.41	0.37	0.10	0.46
Unique coverage	0.08	0.09	0.05	0.46
Consistency	0.83	0.77	1.00	0.66
Total number of cases	6/25	8/25	1/25	4/25
solution coverage	0.55			0.46
solution consistency	0.82			0.66

High de facto adaptation

PATH 1: Large organizations with low autonomy, under a tightly coupled coordination arrangement belong to the path that leads to high de facto adaptation. This path is covered by one department and five departmental agencies. One of the linking pins of the involved departmental agencies explains that cross-cutting policy objectives are strongly embedded in his/her organization. However, the organization experiences sometimes that the tools, which are provided by the horizontal departments are ‘a tool in themselves’. In other words, the framework which is offered by the horizontal departments is often very rigid and strict. Instead, cross-cutting policy objectives should focus on mentality change. They should start from the questions: where do we want to change things, what is the impact of some objectives? (Repondent 48).

PATH 2: Organizations with low autonomy and which have policy implementation as their main task, adapt under a tightly coupled coordination arrangement de facto to a high level. This cluster contains eight departmental agencies. One of the organizations feels the tightly coupled coordination arrangement in the austerity measures very hard, as alleged by the respondent. The objectives are obliged and therefore *have* to be implemented: *“eventually you will be forced, you cannot set this cross-cutting policy objective aside”*. Nonetheless, he/she fears that at certain point this organization has too few staff to keep running smoothly. An indicator to justify this fear is, according to the respondent, the massive

³⁶ ● – indicate the presence of a condition, O indicate the absence of a condition

³⁷ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.80) to the outcome of interest.

³⁸ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.82) to the outcome of interest.

amount of overtime at the moment. Many staff members have to work extra hours to get things done. Moreover, the uncertainty that comes along with the cross-cutting objective needs constant attention from the management team (respondent 29).

PATH 3: Being a small organization, with low autonomy and policy development as main task, under a loosely coupled coordination arrangement leads to a high level of *de facto* adaptation. The only organization belonging to this path is the department which is coordinating the policy issue itself. The linking pin from this organization explains that he/she feels that their organization has 'a neutral interest' in the involved cross-cutting policy objective. In many other organizations, interest groups have a stake in that cross-cutting issue and voice this stake through these organizations. This leads to instances in which these other organizations feel that they might lose some of their responsibilities and tasks. The linking pin notices that he/she has a broader view, certainly in the case of cross-cutting policy objectives, a given from the organizational task. Whereas agencies have a specific task as well as specific clients and hence could have to defend specific interests, an organization with a policy development task can look broader (Respondent 50).

Low *de facto* adaptation

PATH 4: Organizations with policy implementation as their main task, subjected to a loosely coupled coordination arrangement, adapt *de facto* to a low level. This is surprising, because the combination of tightly coupled coordination with low autonomy and a policy implementation task leads organizations to adapt *de facto* to a high extent. It might be that coordination arrangements, which are tight, can put more pressure on organizations to get them to adapt. The solution consistency of this path is a bit low, so the proof to make a causal argument is not too strong. Two cases contradict the path, and adapt *de facto* strong.

One of these organizational linking pins has a positive view on the loosely coordinated arrangement. He/she does not believe in formalizing or imposing collaboration, but rather in encouraging and facilitating cooperation, to make sure that co-ownership evolves. He/she mentions for instance the creation of liaison functions, or partially working in another organization. Having an innovative culture, with room to experiment is according to the linking pin the key to adapt to new demands. Focus on the client and a structure like Integrated Youth Care helps to create a common goal, language and culture, which benefits cross-cutting collaboration, as stated by this respondent (respondent 55). From this follows that even when we discuss the same coordination arrangement, linking pins perceive them very differently. This means that the design of the coordination arrangements brings about very different perceptions from different linking pins and organizations, which most likely also

influences the different patterns of adaptation of these organizations. Furthermore, it might also explain why a one-size-fits-all mode of coordination does not work.

One of the organizational linking pins who does belong to this cluster of organizations states that the organization is not so active to embed the cross-cutting objective. This organizational linking pin feels that the impact of the cross-cutting policy objective was for a long time misjudged in the organization. The management felt that the impact would be so large once they started with the objectives, that they adopted a wait-and-see attitude. The interviewee also mentions the policy implementation task of the organization, which brings about a stronger link between practice and policy according to him/her, and a less stronger link with cross-cutting policy objectives (Respondent 52).

Two of the paths are not totally consistent (path 2 and 4 of Table 37), but nevertheless, we can explain nineteen organizations with this 'model'. Low autonomy is present in all the paths leading to high de facto adaptation (in combination with other conditions). A tight coordination arrangement with low autonomy and being large OR a policy implementation task leads to high de facto adaptation. A loose coordination arrangement and a policy implementation task leads to low de facto organizational adaptation. Again and again we can see a split between organizations with a policy development task, and an – implementation task. The first are rather explained by the paths leading to high adaptation, the latter are fairly explained by the paths leading to low adaptation.

5.4.3. INTERACTION OF COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

This analysis in the paragraph underneath focusses on unraveling the paths of the interaction of the organizational characteristics and the coordination arrangement to explain high or low adaptation. The analysis leads to five different paths, shown in Table 38.

TABLE 38: HIGH AND LOW ADAPTATION, INTERACTION WITH COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT

The four types of adaptation ³⁹					
	High adaptation (little plans, huge action, huge plans, huge action) ⁴⁰		Low adaptation (little plans, little action – huge plans, little action) ⁴¹		
Conditions	PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4	PATH 5
High autonomy	O	O			O
Large size	O	●	O	●	●
Policy development task	●	●	O	O	O
Strong coupling	O	●	O	●	
Raw coverage	0.11	0.12	0.30	0.39	0.44
Unique coverage	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.02
Consistency	1.00	0.83	0.97	0.68	0.76
Total number of cases	1/25	2/25	2/25	8/25	5/25
solution coverage	0.18		0.63		
solution consistency	0.87		0.71		

High adaptation

PATH 1: Small organizations with low autonomy, with policy development as their main task, and functioning under a loosely coupled coordination arrangement adapt to a high extent to cross-cutting policy objectives by delivering ‘huge plans and huge action’. The path explains one department, and is exactly the same as path 3 explaining high de facto adaptation in above analysis. It is surprising that an organization, which is small and under a loosely coupled coordination arrangement adapts to a high extent. This might lead us to say that the stewardship perspective is applicable. However, the path describes the organization which is the lead organization in the cross-cutting objective. At the same time, it is close to the minister. Although, a bit counter-intuitive, the case-knowledge leads us to say that the agency perspective is applicable to this case.

PATH 2: When under a tight coupled coordination arrangement, large organizations with low autonomy and a policy development task adapt to a high extent to cross-cutting policy objectives. The linking pin explains this high extent of adaptation of his/her organization because the organization experiences a lot of control in this cross-cutting policy objective, with no room to maneuver or to deviate from what is imposed in terms of this cross-cutting issue. The objective is mentioned very prominently in the organization’s documents and is de facto in their day-to-day operations a ‘hot topic’. Due to the tightly

³⁹ ● – indicate the presence of a condition, O indicate the absence of a condition

⁴⁰ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.83) to the outcome of interest.

⁴¹ Table includes truth table rows which lead consistently (.80) to the outcome of interest. One path explain low adaptation was left out, because it has a unique coverage score of 0.000. This means that the cases are already covered by another path.

coupled coordination arrangement, organizations have little to say at the moment, according to the respondent: *“This is also an own fault of the organizations themselves. Through BBB (Flemish Agencification Reform, red.) they got a lot to say and they did not well cope with that freedom, so therefore a tightly coupled coordination arrangement has been installed. The price of the past has to be paid”* (Respondent 30).

Low adaptation

PATH 3: Small organizations with an implementation task under a loosely coupled coordination arrangement adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives to a low extent. Two semi-autonomous agencies belong to this cluster. In terms of structurally adapting to the cross-cutting policy objectives, one of the respondents remarks that it has not been structurally embedded in the organization. The organizational linking pin contributes the low extent of adaptation to the former leadership and the size of the organization. He/she thinks that the management team of the organization was not fully informed about the tasks that has to be done for these cross-cutting objectives. The perception internally within the organization is, according to the respondent that the involved cross-cutting issue is on the agenda already for a very long time, without real decisive steps. The organizational reflex was therefore in the last years not to be pro-active in the cross-cutting policy objectives (Respondent 53).

PATH 4: Under a tightly coupled coordination arrangement, large organizations with an implementation task adapt to a low extent to the cross-cutting policy objectives. Four departmental agencies and four semi-autonomous agencies belong to this cluster. Although this path covers a lot of cases - the solution consistency is a bit low - so the proof to make a causal argument is not too strong. One organization contradicts this path. It has high autonomy and considers the austerity measures as a loss for the organization. In the opinion of the linking pin too much focus is (in the Flemish Government and in the current thesis) on cross-cutting issues that have been assigned, in terms of competences, exclusively to horizontal departments. According to him/her this is a narrow view on cross-cutting issues, because most cross-cutting issues are dealt with in a bottom-up manner in the Flemish Government. In these cases it is necessary to collaborate with many organizations to reach intended objectives. He/she tries to say that all results, and organizational adaptation is context-bound: *“depending on the cross-cutting policy issue you want to address, it leads to totally different results”*.

According to one of the respondents explained by this path, the organization does not mention the objectives very prominently in its documents. The linking pin explains that they are in documents sometimes a bit vague, because of distrust towards the horizontal departments. This stems from having high autonomy, the staff identifies most strongly with

organization, instead of with 'the Flemish Government'. Besides that, internally, the organization is a bit fragmented and organized in clusters, this affects the de facto adaptation (Respondent 36).

PATH 5: Large organizations with an implementation task and low autonomy adapt to a low extent to the cross-cutting policy objectives. Whether these organizations are under a tightly or loosely coupled arrangement proves to be redundant in this cluster of organizations. Five organizations belong to this cluster, all departmental agencies. One of the linking pins explains that he/she is the only one that is active to embed the objective in the organization. As a consequence, discussions about the objective are rather bilateral and not a common concern in the organization. Although the minister is, according to this respondent, very well aware of the goal and is fully supporting the organization in its efforts, the objective is not a priority (respondent 38).

5.4.4. INTERIM CONCLUSIONS: INTERACTION OF COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is clear that explanations for the degree of organizational adaptation are quite complex. Most of the conditions may have different effects depending on the combination with other conditions. Moreover, consistency and coverage is not always high, which means that there are other factors at play, and that we must be careful to confirm conclusions. With some certainty we can say that when we study the interaction with the degree of coupling in the coordination arrangement (i.e. tightly or loosely), the resulting paths look similar to the ones only considering the organizational characteristics. Furthermore, a tightly coupled coordination arrangement in combination with other factors leads in almost all paths to high adaptation.

De jure adaptation: the coordination arrangement (i.e. tightly or loosely) does not seem to play a major role in the case of de jure adaptation, because it is not often included in paths (see Table 36). However, a tight coordination arrangement (in combination with other conditions) is present in the path leading to high *de jure* adaptation. A loose coordination arrangement (in combination with other conditions) in the paths leading to low *de jure* adaptation.

De facto adaptation: The degree of coupling appears as a condition in most paths leading either to high or low *de facto* adaptation (see Table 37). A tight coordination arrangement is only present in the paths leading to high adaptation. This coordination arrangement (in combination with other factors) leads to high adaptation. A loosely coupled coordination arrangement in combination with a policy development task and being small leads to high *de*

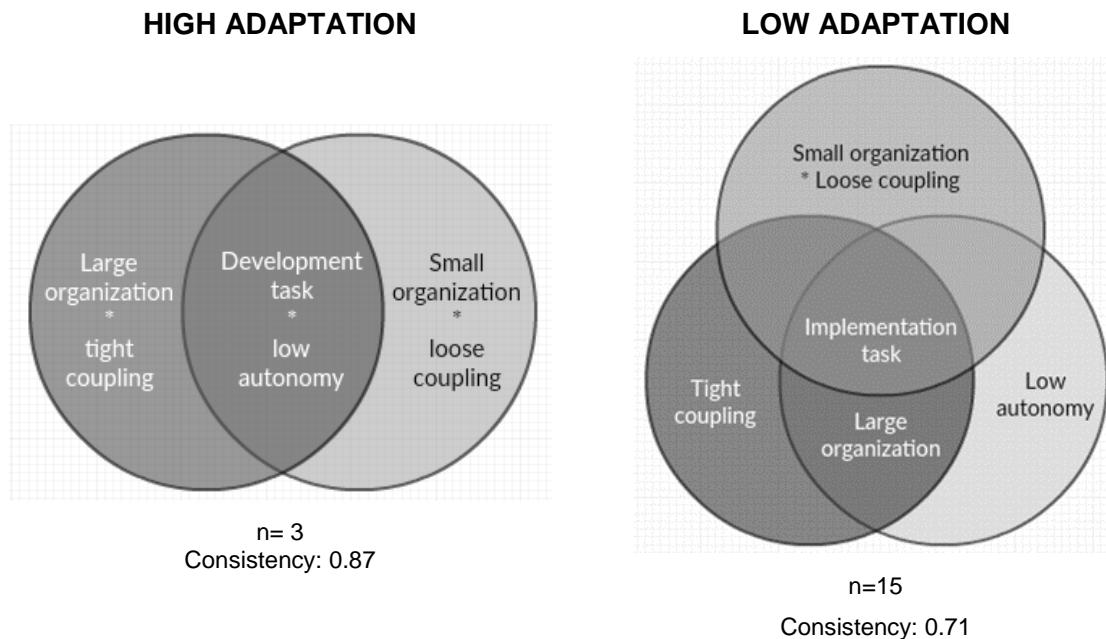
facto adaptation. However, if the organization has implementation as its main task and if it is coordinated by a loose coordination arrangement it subsequently adapts *de facto* to a low extent.

Four types of adaptation: When we look at the paths (In Table 38) explaining high *adaptation*, we can see that these only explain three departments. In particular, small departments adapt *de facto* when subjected to a loosely coupled coordination arrangement, large departments when the coordination arrangement is tight. Small organizations with an implementation task adapt to a low extent under a loose coordination arrangement. Large organizations with an implementation task under a tight coordination arrangement seem to adapt to a low extent. They might have the capacity to ignore the tight coordination arrangement.

These paths can be plotted in Venn-diagrams (see Graph 7) following an idea offered in Schneider & Wagemann, 2010). In such a diagram relations between the organizational characteristics and coordination arrangement are better to distinguish. This Venn diagram is based on the paths described in Table 38 about the four types of adaptation, and is line with the analysis of *de facto* and *de jure* (shown in Table 36 and 37). In this graph we can see a clear division in the different types of organizations.

There seems to be a hard split between departments and agencies. Departments which, by definition all have low autonomy and a policy development task, are represented by the paths leading to high adaptation. A tight coordination arrangement seems to get large departments to adapt to a high extent and a loose coordination arrangement leads small departments to adapt to a high extent. Organizations with a policy implementation task are at the core of the paths leading to low adaptation (see right Venn-diagram – Graph 7). Organizations with a policy implementation task which are large seem to have room to ignore the tightly coupled coordination arrangement and adapt subsequently to a low extent. Under loosely coupled coordination arrangements, small policy implementing organizations will adapt to a low extent.

GRAPH 7: VENN DIAGRAMS OF PATHS LEADING TO HIGH ADAPTATION AND LOW ADAPTATION
(BASED ON TABLE 38)



5.5. CONCLUSIONS — ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

This chapter studies organizational adaptation. In the theoretical framework hypotheses were formulated about (1.) the extent of adaptation under different coordination arrangements, (2.) the influence of organizational characteristics, and (3.) the interaction between the coordination arrangement and the organizational characteristics on organizational adaptation. Based on the agency and stewardship perspective, specific hypotheses about organizational adaptation were formulated. The original hypotheses, but also the results of the analysis are shown in Table 39. The results will be discussed in detail after the table.

TABLE 39: HYPOTHESES AND RESULTS

Agency perspective		Stewardship perspective	
Hypothesis	Result	Hypothesis	Result
H4a. Organizations under tightly coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly	Indeed majority of cases under a tightly coupled coordination arrangement adapt highly	H4b. Organizations under loosely coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly	More support for contrary hypothesis, but there are also organizations under a loosely coupled arrangement which adapt to a high degree
H5a. if organizations have low autonomy, a large size and a policy development task this will lead to high adaptation.	Data seems to support the hypothesis, low autonomy leads to high adaptation if combined with a being large and a policy development task. Low autonomy and having a development task is sufficient to lead to high de facto adaptation	H5b. if organizations have high autonomy, a small size, and have a policy implementation task this will lead to high adaptation.	True for <i>de facto</i> adaptation: having a policy implementation in combination with being large
H6a. Being under tightly coupled coordination arrangements in combination with low autonomy, a large size and policy development as main task lead to high adaptation.	Data supports the hypothesis. However, at the same time a loosely coupled coordination arrangement is enough to get organization with low autonomy, policy development as main task and a small size to adapt to a high extent	H6b. Being under loosely coupled coordination arrangements in combination with high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task lead to high adaptation.	Data does not support the hypothesis. A loosely coupled coordination arrangement in combination with a small size and policy implementation as main task adapt leads to low adaptation.

Extent of adaptation

The first research question guiding this chapter was RQ 3: *To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?* Based on the agency and stewardship perspective two hypotheses were formulated, respectively H4a and H4b (row 1 of Table 39), to explain the extent of adaptation. Based on the agency perspective on organizational adaptation the expectation is that tightly coupled coordination arrangements work best to get organizations to adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives. The data gives more support for this hypothesis. The austerity measures – coordinated with a tightly coupled coordination arrangement are made most smart and concrete both in documents and de facto, compared to administrative simplification and Integrated Youth Care. This gives some indications, but the patterns to explain this process are not entirely clear. Even though the majority of the organizations under the tightly coordination arrangement adapt to a high extent there are also organizations that fall into other adaptation categories. In other words, also under loose and mixed coordination arrangements there are organizations which adapt high and others, who adapt to a low extent. Probably, the explanation for high or low

adaptation is not straightforward. Other factors, the type of organization, i.e. the organizational characteristics, might play a role as well.

Influence of organizational characteristics

Secondly, this chapter addressed the fourth research question (RQ 4): *Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?* The size of an organization seems to be a good indicator to explain if an organization will adapt itself or not. Many of the interviewees address the capacity or the time needed to spend on the cross-cutting policy objectives, which is more present in large organizations. Large organizations are more often situated in the paths leading to high adaptation, either *de jure* or *de facto*. If *de facto* adaptation is considered, organizations with a policy development task adapt strongly, irrespective of the size of the organization. Size does seem to play a role if we look to the policy implementing organizations, being a large implementing organization leads to high *de facto adaptation*. High autonomy appears almost in no path. Thus, high autonomy does not lead to high nor low adaptation or is redundant in explaining adaptation. Low autonomy is present in many paths, both explaining high and low adaptation. In the case of low adaptation, low autonomy is always combined with being a small organization.

Interaction organizational characteristics and coordination arrangement

Thirdly, the following research question was addressed (RQ 5): *How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?* When we look into the analyses, we can see that the consistency and coverage measures is not always high, which means that there are other factors at play, and that we must be careful to confirm conclusions. When combined with different coordination arrangements, the paths look similar to the ones not considering the arrangements. Surprising is that the solution consistency and solution coverage are a bit higher compared to the analyses including only the organizational characteristics as conditions. The 'model' including the different coordination arrangements seems to explain more cases in a consistent way (Legewie, 2013). The coordination arrangements appear in all paths of *de facto* adaptation, and seems to play less role in the case of *de jure* adaptation. While it is included in much less paths explaining a low level of *de jure* adaptation.

Low or high organizational adaptation can firstly be explained by the policy task of the organization. Departments, which have by definition a policy development task and low autonomy are mostly present in the paths leading to high adaptation. The size of a

department seems to be a good indicator to select the mechanisms to coordinate the cross-cutting objectives. Small departments adapt highly if they are under a loose arrangement, large departments if they are under a tight coordination arrangement. Organizations with a policy implementation task are mostly present in the paths leading to low adaptation. If they are large, they seem to have room to ignore the tightly coupled coordination arrangement, and adapt subsequently low. Small organizations with a policy implementation task, under loose coupling adapt to a low extent. The size of these policy implementing organizations could play a role in two ways: capacity to participate in cross-cutting policy objectives or capacity to ignore coordinate signals.

As will be clear from these conclusions the hypotheses, which were formulated based on the agency perspective (H4a, H5a and H6a), seem to be supported by the data. However, eight organizations which have a policy implementation task and have to capacity to align (i.e. large organizations – path 2 of Table 34 and Table 37) do *de facto* adapt highly to the cross-cutting objectives. Thus, organizational adaptation is not so easily explained. The many paths that follow from the analyses show that there are a lot of explanations that account for high or low adaptation to cross-cutting objectives.

Alternative explanations for organizational adaptation

The analysis shows very complex explanations for organizational adaptation. The model that was chosen (including the organizational characteristics and the coordination arrangement) is not always fit to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives. In other words, the analysis shows some deviant cases. Deviant cases are organizations that inhibit the same organizational characteristics, compared to others covered by a path, but for some reason do not behave in the same way as the other organizations do (Legewie, 2013; Schneider & Rohlfing, 2013). We need an explanation why - if all the organizational characteristics are present - this leads in the deviant cases not to the same outcome.

The interviews point out different explanations. *Political and administrative leadership* seems to be important. Political leadership and attention for the cross-cutting objectives makes the organizations prioritize the objectives, while a lack of attention leads often to no adaptation. This also applies to administrative leadership and attention. Moreover, some linking pins do not feel 'backed-up' by the management if they have certain proposals, or feel that they do not have enough authority or mandate to get other units of individuals in the organization to cooperate. Linking pins have very different perceptions about the coordination arrangements. One of the deviant cases has shown that the linking pin is in favor of the coordination approach, which leads in their organization to organizational

adaptation. Including the perception about the coordination arrangement in further research might lead to a better explanatory model. Another deviant case points out that bottom-up processes and initiatives are not taken into account in the model and get less attention in the Flemish Government. The necessity to collaborate with many organizations to reach intended objectives and the bottom-up processes can enrich our model to explain organizational adaptation.

6. CONCLUSION

Coordination is a recurrent problem in public administration, and has been around – as a concept - in both scholarly literature and practice for decades. However, the field of research is still relatively young. This dissertation tries to add to the theoretical and substantive knowledge about coordination of cross-cutting policy objectives. Throughout this thesis the concept of coordination is linked to organizational adaptation. Organizational adaptation is seen as the process in which organizations cope and weigh cross-cutting policy objectives and adapt (or not) to comply with these demands (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 8). In the case of horizontal cross-cutting policy objectives, studying coordination is particularly interesting. Such issues vary in their characteristics and approaches but always need - by definition – multiple organizations, which do not have a hierarchical relation with each other, to reach a coordinated response. These cross-cutting policies may vary in complexity, meaning the knowledge and solvability of the problem, the political urgency, the focus, interdependencies and the number of actors involved.

Many scholars claim that current policy problems are more complex, and necessitate a coordinated response from all involved actors to deal with them. Coordination arrangements for cross-cutting policy objectives are deployed to (1.) bundle the information necessary to address the problem, (2.) stimulate innovative practices as they bring people together with different expertise, professions and know-hows, (3.) reduce inconsistencies, (4.) improve service delivery, and (5.) make efficient and effective use of resources by removing overlaps, lacunae and redundancies (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004; Peters, 1998; Pollitt, 2003). Coordination can be done in a relatively tight or loose manner (Chisholm, 1992). Literature points out that the characteristics of the policy issue might lead to indications about how to coordinate actors in a way which leads to organizational adaptation (Alexander, 1995; Peters, 1998; Turnpenny et al., 2009).

Next to the complexity of problems, a second particularity makes this subject also interesting. The inherent complexity of the Flemish government structure makes coming to a coordinated response to deal with cross-cutting policy objectives challenging. The agencification reform (Beter Bestuurlijk Beleid - BBB) of 2006 created many semi-autonomous agencies, and thirteen ministries. Besides that, policy development and policy implementation were split up, and assigned to departments and agencies. However, there is no hierarchical relation between departments and agencies nor between line and horizontal ministries. Furthermore, BBB left mechanisms for horizontal cross-cutting collaboration underdeveloped. This combination of features makes the Flemish government an extreme

case. Its structural features seem to necessitate loosely coupled coordination arrangements. In such a deviant case, processes and outcomes are often not what traditional theories would lead us to expect. By selecting such an extreme case we expected to disclose more knowledge about coordination arrangements and basic mechanisms at play, which can be used as insights for other countries and cross-cutting policy objectives.

The main question of this dissertation is: *what explains organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?* To find an answer to the main research question the dissertation is split up in two parts. The first part describes and explains the coordination arrangements deployed to coordinate the implementation of specific cross-cutting policy objectives across public organizations. An in-depth analysis of the extent of organizational adaptation towards these cross-cutting policy objectives and an explanation thereof was conducted in the second part. Two research questions concerning the coordination arrangements for cross-cutting policy objectives were answered, in the first part. The second part addresses three different research questions. In what will follow these research questions will be answered. Afterwards, focus is on what these results mean in light of the theoretical framework that was set-up to study the phenomenon of coordination and organizational adaptation. Afterwards, this chapter sums up the ideas for further research.

6.1. ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEORETICAL REFLECTION

RQ 1: How does the Flemish government organize the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies?

The first research question focused on describing three horizontal cross-cutting policy objectives that necessitate - according to the Flemish Government or other governmental actors - a coordinated approach: the austerity measures, administrative simplification and Integrated Youth Care. The concept 'coordination arrangement' was used to describe and assess the coordination instruments and mechanisms, and was operationalized based on the elements of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework of Elinor Ostrom (2005). Combined with different dimensions stemming from organizational studies, network theory, policy analysis and the coordination literature the framework provides an analytical toolbox to describe cross-cutting policy coordination arrangements. On the one side of the scale, there are the tightly coupled coordination arrangements, on the other side, there are loosely coupled arrangements.

A *tightly coupled coordination arrangement* has a closed and restricted participant constellation with an intense relationship in which a (political) leader takes decisions. It is

based on unilateral agreements, rules and performance based accountability, and is governed by an administrative lead organization (Provan & Kenis, 2008) and formal information channels. In tightly coupled coordination arrangements, the actions of subordinates are determined by superiors. Moreover, authority, instruction, and command are the causal mechanisms to get organizations to adapt to the cross-cutting objectives (Chisholm, 1992).

A *loosely coupled coordination arrangement* has an informal, open and temporary participant constellation, in which multiple organizations take their separate decisions and govern their own actions. The arrangement is lead minister governed, based on a mission statement. Moreover, information exchange happens through informal communication channels and the accountability system is based on peer review. In loosely coupled coordination arrangements roles, tasks and problem definitions are set not by an authority, but by the organizations or members themselves. Organizations stay quite flexible and have room to maneuver to deal with conflicting or complex demands (Jessop, 1998).

Given the fact that the Flemish Government is strongly agencified and characterized by non-hierarchical relationships between organizations, the first research question addressed the following: *How is the coordination of specific cross-cutting policies organized in the Flemish Government?* (RQ1). On the basis of an assessment of the instruments, positions and structures which are used to coordinate the three cross-cutting policy objectives, a tightly, mixed and loosely coupled coordination arrangement can be distinguished. The tightly coupled coordination arrangement is deployed to coordinate the austerity measures, the mixed coordination arrangement coordinates the administrative simplification objectives, and the loosely coupled coordination arrangement is used for coordinating Integrated Youth Care.

The austerity measures began with a loosely coupled approach, which was tightened swiftly. In this case, the participant constellation, political and administrative positions were clearly established. After a short period in which organizations had the opportunity to democratically come to decisions, the political level deployed top-down steering, introduced sanctions, and subsequently a more tightly coupled approach.

The second, mixed coordination arrangement is deployed in the administrative simplification objectives. There are, *de jure*, some elements of tight coupling in the administrative simplification dossiers —for instance the obligation to execute a Regulatory Impact Analysis when introducing new regulation, and the decentralized regulatory units in ministries — but two main reasons show that the coordination arrangement is *de facto* more loose. The administrative simplification objectives have to cope with fragmentation, because of the Flemish government's structure, which is exacerbated by establishing units to coordinate this objective in the ministries. Moreover, the central and decentral units which

were established to create a cross-cutting dynamic have little authority, capacity and tools to do so.

Integrated Youth Care is coordinated via a loosely coupled coordination arrangement. To achieve non-hierarchical intersectoral and multi-level collaboration, IYC policies and actions are developed through permanent coalitions between multiple partners, who democratically decide on the course of action. It is a loosely coupled arrangement, mainly characterized by informal communication and network governance. However, this case shows that loosely coupled coordination arrangements have their limits. Such an arrangement does not facilitate decisions and implementation of policy measures that aim for fundamental changes in task allocations between sectors and organizations. A form of tight coupling, by establishing strong political positions or 'by casting a shadow of hierarchy' (Voets, Verhoest, & Molenveld, 2015) over the cross-cutting policy arena seems to be necessary to overcome the deadlock. This seems to confirm Ostroms' (1990) argument that governments need mixtures of coercive and deliberative instruments to coordinate cross-cutting policy arenas.

The cases show that even within the Flemish government, which is considered to be an extreme case of agencification, with strictly non-hierarchical relationships, policy issues can be coordinated with tightly coupled arrangements. However, from all the cases follows that tight coupling in the administrative apparatus is very difficult. Although, there is a central administrative lead organization (Provan & Kenis, 2008)— the Department for Public Governance in the austerity measures, the central Regulatory Management Unit in case of administrative simplification and the Department for Social Protection and Health in Integrated Youth Care— it has to rely on network-principles. The agencification-reform of 2006 introduced more degrees of freedom regarding the management of departments and agencies, and more result oriented steering of these organizations by their portfolio minister, with direct accountability to the latter. It created a structure in which organizations are juxtaposed. On the one hand, this approach gives leeway to participation processes and the possibility to interact in the decision-making process. On the other hand, this leads to situations in which organizations do not trust the administrative lead organizations (or champions), do not give their information away (also stressed by Rommel & Christiaens, 2009), and to role-conflicts among the champions – who have to convince and persuade people to collaborate, but have to combine this with a 'police-role' (see also Cordova-Novion, 2011).

RQ 2: What policy issue characteristics explain the type of coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting policies?

Literature (Alexander, 1995; Peters, 1998; Turnpenny et al., 2009) points out that some policy issues urge for a tight coordination arrangement, and others necessitate a loosely

coupled arrangement. This was object of the second research question. The theoretical framework describes the influence of three policy issue characteristics on the choice for either a loose or tight coordination arrangement. Focus was on the influence of political urgency, interdependencies and focus (either internal or external) on the design of the coordination arrangement. The expectation is that cross-cutting policy objectives with a high level of political urgency, which are pooled interdependent and with an internal focus (the austerity measures) are coordinated with a tightly coupled coordination arrangement. The second is that cross-cutting policy objectives with a low level of political urgency, which are reciprocal interdependent (O'Toole Jr. & Montjoy, 1984) and with an external focus are coordinated with a loosely coupled coordination arrangement. These expectations informed the cross-cutting policy case selection.

In the case of the austerity measures the political urgency led to the establishment of a strong political champion, who has the authority to sanction organizations. Moreover, urgency leads to a situation in which the political actors and ministerial cabinets give authority to central departments to monitor and control the behavior of line ministries (Peters, 2011; Pollitt, 2010). This mirrors tendencies in other countries to (re-) strengthen the center of government (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Christensen & Lægreid, 2008). Politicization and the conflicts that arose during the policy preparation phase necessitated such an approach.

With respect to the administrative simplification objectives, the declining *political urgency* led to a loosening of the coordination arrangement. Although there are quite some elements of tightly coupling in the arrangement, the lack of political attention undoes them. Though political urgency was initially present, all interviewees claim that it declined over the years. For the respondents, attention from political actors is essential for its success. Without this attention, the legitimacy and value of coordination instruments is nonexistent.

Focus is merely a precondition for either loosely or tightly coupled coordination arrangements. With a precondition I mean that a certain focus does not necessarily brings about a certain coordination form, but whether the target group is taken into account informs the design of the coordination arrangement, e.g. an impetus. In Integrated Youth Care participation and engagement of stakeholders in policy decisions is part of the process in order to improve services, products and processes. Taking this target group into account leads to a loosely coupled approach in which sectoral and stakeholder interests play a big role. However, focus of the discussions in the networks were often about the internal operations. The interviewees stress that a focus on the target group instead can help to bridge organizational differences, to bring about a collaborative approach. However, this only works if participants recognize the necessity of the collaboration. An internal focus creates a precondition for tightly coupled coordination arrangements. A tightly coupled coordination arrangement does not always follow from this internal focus (see the case of administrative

simplification), but the focus informs the design of the coordination arrangement for the austerity measures. As soon as the political and administrative level noticed the 'turf wars' and organizational conflicts that arose, they quickly decided upon a tightly coupled coordination approach.

Interdependencies between organizations seem to be dealt with via tightly coupled coordination arrangements. Hence, the 'possible interdependencies' and the subsequent uncertainty that could arise, are in the austerity measures 'tamed' through centralization and control. This is in line with authors (Chisholm, 1992) who describe that the best way to deal with high levels of interdependence is tight coupling. However, tight coupling, e.g. formal tools and consistent supervision are not enough. The case of administrative simplification showed that some coordination arrangements can be perceived as just a 'numeral exercise' or 'a tool in themselves', which get implemented because of 'force', but they are not seen as added value.

Especially, political urgency and interdependencies seem to have an influence on coordination arrangements in terms of their extent of coupling (tightly or loosely). First of all, political urgency is according to the interviewees needed for organizations to prioritize the cross-cutting policy objectives. Especially in the Flemish Government, where the portfolio ministers and their ministerial cabinets are the main principals for departments and agencies (as administrative principals are absent), a lack of political attention and urgency makes the coordination arrangements unclear. If political priorities and objectives are not clearly set and stipulated, there is uncertainty or even non-implementation. Respondents seem to urge conscious policy choices (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). They explain that they need cross-cutting programs which are focused, with clear priorities and clearly state what is envisioned, further completion should be done by the organizations with room to maneuver. The clearer the cross-cutting policy objectives, the less conflicts between and within organizations when interpreting and implementing the objectives there will be. Subsequently, the easier it is to prioritize the involved objective and the less ambiguous it becomes successfully adapt to the objective (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Christensen & Lægreid, 2008; Sabel & O'Donnell, 2000).

RQ 3: To what extent does the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?

Organizational adaptation is the process in which organizations cope and weigh environmental demands and the adaptation required to comply with them (Gumport & Sporn, 1999, p. 18). The level of organizational adaptation refers in this thesis to the extent to which the organizations coordinated by a coordination arrangement are integrating the cross-cutting policy objectives in its organizational goals, structures, and actions (Meyer & Rowan,

1977). In this thesis the concept is operationalized as structural organizational adaptation, the extent to which the organization aligns its organizational goals, monitors the cross-cutting policy objectives, allocates resources, and appoints tasks and responsibilities to specific staff members with respect to the implementation of the cross-cutting objectives.

Ten organizations of the Flemish Government of two policy sectors were selected on the basis of their characteristics (autonomy, size and policy task - see RQ4). In these organizations the structural organizational adaptation towards three cross-cutting policy objectives was studied. Organizational planning documents were collected (in total 88 documents) to study the *de jure* adaptation. This is the extent to which the organization adapts its documents to comply with the cross-cutting policy objectives, based on the researchers' assessment of the organizational planning documents. Moreover, *de facto* adaptation is the extent to which the organization adapts to the cross-cutting policy objectives, as perceived by the organizational linking pin in a face-to-face interview. Combining *de jure* and *de facto* adaptation led to four types (i.e. extents of) adaptation.

Based on the agency and stewardship perspective two hypotheses were formulated to explain the extent of organizational adaptation of the organizations to coordination arrangements. From the agency perspective followed the expectation that tightly coupled coordination arrangements will induce organizations to adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives to a high extent. According to the stewardship perspective, organizations under loosely coupled coordination arrangements adapt themselves highly.

Although, the patterns found are rather diffuse, the majority of cases under tightly coupling adapt highly, compared to the mixed and loosely coupled coordination arrangement. Although, this intensive, detailed, and 'hard' coordination arrangement met its goal, many interviewees stress that they missed substantive discussions about the topic and did not see the added value of the tight arrangement, like Argyris (1964) stressed. There is relatively more support for the proposition based on the agency perspective, but there are also organizations under a loosely coupled arrangement which adapt to a high degree. All the coordination arrangements do have elements of tight coupling in them, which could also mean that this leads stewards to adapt to a low extent, because they feel distrusted by their principals and lose their intrinsic motivation (Argyris, 1964; Davis et al., 1997). Most likely, more factors are at play to explain organizational adaptation than solely the degree of coupling of the coordination arrangement. The next research question examines if the organizational characteristics could lead to a better understanding of the adaptation process.

RQ 4: Which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives?

Based on the agency and stewardship perspective two hypotheses were formulated about which organizational characteristics explain the extent to which organizations adapt to cross-cutting policy objectives. From the agency perspective followed the expectation that organizations with low autonomy, a large size and policy development as main task adapt highly. From the stewardship perspective can be argued that organizations with high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task adapt highly.

The data seems to support the hypothesis following from the agency perspective: having low autonomy leads to high organizational adaptation if combined with being a large organization and having a policy development task. In other words, large departments adapt most strongly to cross-cutting policy objectives⁴². These large departments have 'huge plans and huge actions'. However, also organizations which have an implementation task and are large adapt highly *de facto*. So, there are large agencies which adapt highly *de facto*. For this group of *large agencies* with 'little plans but huge action', the level of autonomy does not matter that much. The combination of being an organization with low autonomy and a policy implementation task (i.e. departmental agency), but with a *small* size leads to a low level of organizational adaptation (*de jure* and *de facto*). This most probably has to do with capacity issues, as this is also reflected by the interviews (and other studies, e.g. Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998).

Hence, the organizational size is a relevant factor to explain whether an organization will adapt itself or not. According to interviewees, some cross-cutting policy programs are too encompassing, have too many objectives and forget to focus on crucial priorities. This leads to a feeling of overburdening in terms of participation in the structures (also stresses by 6 et al., 1999). Furthermore, the respondents give as an explanation that intra-ministerial and certainly inter-ministerial collaboration is a continuous effort in terms of staff and time (see also: Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Lægreid, Sarapuu, Rykkja, & Randma-Liiv, 2014).

From the agency perspective the hypothesis was derived that organizations with low autonomy, a large size, and policy development as main task would adapt to the strongest extent. The data renders relatively more support for this hypothesis. Although there are some consistent paths, some cases remain unexplained and the model based on organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation does not give the full picture. The analysis that followed to answer research question RQ5 takes into account the interaction between the coordination arrangement and the organizational characteristics.

⁴² Irrespective of their size, departments always show high levels of *de facto* adaptation ('huge action'), but they only show high levels of *de jure* adaptation ('huge plans') in case they are large.

RQ 5: How does the coordination arrangement (tightly or loosely coupled) interact with the organizational characteristics to explain organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives?

From the agency perspective can be derived that being under a tightly coupled arrangement in combination with having low autonomy, a large organizational size and policy development as main task would lead organizations to adapt to the cross-cutting objectives to a high level. The hypothesis that loose coupling, in combination with high autonomy, a small size and policy implementation as main task leads organizations to adapt a high extent follows from the stewardship perspective.

All the propositions which were formulated based on the agency perspective are more strongly supported by the data. The stewardship perspective does not seem to explain organizational adaptation very well. Based on the data can be stated, with reasonable certainty, that when being under a tightly coupled coordination arrangement large departments adapt strongly. However, being under a loosely coupled coordination arrangement leads small departments to adapt highly. Apparently, for departments the type of coordination arrangement interacts with their organizational size in determining the level of adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives. Under tightly coupled coordination arrangements large-sized departments adapt both *de jure* and *de facto* (huge plans and huge actions). However, small sized departments under loosely coupled coordination arrangements will adapt *de facto* but not *de jure*, stated differently, they deliver 'little plans but huge action'. It could be, like stated in the literature that adapting is easier if an organization has a policy development task (contributing 'texts', vision development etc.), compared to the task of agencies who have to coordinate or adapt actions (Bakvis & Juillet, 2004).

Organizations with a policy implementation task (i.e. agencies) are at the core of the paths leading to low levels of adaptation. In they are large, they seem to have room to ignore the pressures stemming from a tightly coupled arrangement and adapt subsequently to a low level. It could be that larger organizations, at greater distance from the central government can resist control efforts (also stressed by de Zilwa, 2010) from central departments and portfolio ministers better than organizations closer to the center of government and hence lower levels of autonomy.

An indication of this is that although some departmental agencies (low autonomy and policy implementation task) under a tightly coupled coordination arrangement show high levels of *de facto* adaptation (cfr Table 37), large-sized departmental agencies show low levels of adaptation in general, irrespective of the coordination arrangement they are subjected to (cfr Table 38). Small organizations with an implementation task only seem to be able to resist loosely coupled coordination arrangement, in which case they show low levels

of adaptation (cfr Table 38). This explanation might describe the capacity problems, as mentioned before, these are small or poorly resourced organizations with little opportunity to invest in cross-cutting policy objective (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998).

6.2. METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

6.2.1. STUDYING COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

This dissertation has a value in having developed a more refined way to study coordination arrangements by distinguishing several dimensions which together form more loosely or tightly coupled coordination arrangements. This conceptualization and operationalization overcomes some of the problems of the hierarchy, market and network typology which is based on ideal-types of coordination mechanisms which hardly ever are observable in reality. The H-M-N typology is insufficiently operationalized to grasp the hybridity and complexity of coordination arrangements, because it describes them as ideal types. The eight coordination-dimensions developed in this thesis, on the basis of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (Ostrom, 2005), give more insight in different elements of a complex coordination arena. The analysis showed, in line with what Hood (2000) describes, that coordination arrangements inhibit *de facto* both tightly as well loosely coupled elements and that coordination arrangements are often hybrid. In the current era - where contrasting images of coordination prevail (like NPG and post-crisis management) - it seems fruitful to develop the dimensions further and to apply them to other governments and cross-cutting policy objectives.

The influence of the coordination arrangement on organizational adaptation is hard to describe, and the analysis shows that explanatory paths are complex. The adaptation process seems to have an organization-specific explanation. We can say, with reasonable certainty, that the perception and interpretation of the organization *about* the coordination arrangement is an *intermediate factor* that explains whether organizations adapt or not. Another study by the author (Molenveld & Verhoest, 2015) showed that even when respondents talk about the same coordination arrangements, they perceive and interpret them very differently. The perception about the coordination arrangement and the interpretation thereof by organizational actors acts like a 'filtering process' which is also central to the autopoiesis concept of Niklas Luhmann (1986). With this concept, the author tries to describe a process in which an organization makes sense of the overly complex environment, by thought and digestion, which can trigger organizational adaptation. An organization only adapts if the structures and perceptions of the organization "*allow for reactions to 'important' environmental events*" (Seidl, 2004, p. 4). This might explain why a

one-size-fits all mode of coordination does not work. As coordination arrangements bring about very different perceptions ('numeral exercise', too intrusive, overburdening of network structures etc.) and this interpretation most likely also influences the different patterns of adaptation (see for more explanation paragraph 6.3).

6.2.2. STUDYING ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

The measurement of organizational adaptation was based upon the premise that how the organizational adaptation is *de jure* framed and designed (Sorensen, 2006) in the organizational documents, can deviate from the *de facto* organizational adaptation. Combining *de facto* and *de jure* showed its usability. First of all, the empirical material shows that there is a lot of *de facto* implementation without any change in organizational documents and vice versa. Secondly, measuring this in very systematic way, by addressing the same structural adaptation indicators in different organizations with very different tasks made cases very comparable on different levels and across the cross-cutting policy issues we have studied. However, this measurement of structural adaptation (both formal and *de facto*) did *not* include a study of the *de facto organizational actions* or the *goal achievement*. The extent of structural adaptation refers to what extent the organizations formulate goals, assign responsibilities, employ monitoring systems and allocate budgets, but we do not actually measure in our cases whether the organizations actually implement the cross-cutting objectives by substantive actions and to which extent they achieved the goals which were set. Including the measurement of these actions and goal achievement in further research is important, for instance because some organizations in our cases stress that they reach the objectives, without structural adaptation (see for more explanation paragraph 6.3).

The explanation for organizational adaptation was sought in the interaction of different variables, mainly because organizations are sets of different characteristics. Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) offered a way to study these complex interactions. As FsQCA minimizes explanations to their core conditions, which allowed us to seek for consistent patterns. The case-knowledge enriched the understanding of the patterns. However, the explanatory models leave much unexplained, as most conditions can have different effects depending on the combination with other conditions.⁴³ The combined model (Legewie, 2013) with the coordination arrangements as well as organizational factors does not explain the organizational adaptation process fully. It shows that irrelevant conditions were included or that crucial conditions were missed.

⁴³ This is clear from the analysis. The FsQCA consistency and coverage measures are not always high, which means that there are other factors in play, and that we must be careful to confirm hypotheses.

With Q-methodology part of this problem is solved, because it adds supplementary information to the discussion about, and the knowledge of organizational adaptation. The analysis of the Q-sorts points to two different perspectives on organizational adaptation. Firstly, a perspective from organizational linking pins who claim to adapt strongly to the cross-cutting policies. These organizations seek to align their actions to the cross-cutting policy objectives. They want to serve the collective and are especially motivated by social goals. The second type of organizations have a hard time prioritizing cross-cutting policy objectives. According to these respondents adapting in terms of time, budget, and integrating the goals in the monitoring is a struggle. This is an obstacle which is mentioned in many other studies (e.g. 6 et al., 1999).

Both approaches, the Q-methodology and FsQCA can be positioned in the *critical realist* tradition. This approach was chosen because large-N approaches (e.g. quantitative surveys) inform us how specific policy issues are translated into organization-specific goals and structures; they do not, however, inform us about specific organizational characteristics and how these influence actors and instruments. Case studies on the other hand, on the level of cross-cutting policy objectives and organizations, are useful because of propositional depth and insight; they do not, however, show general trends.

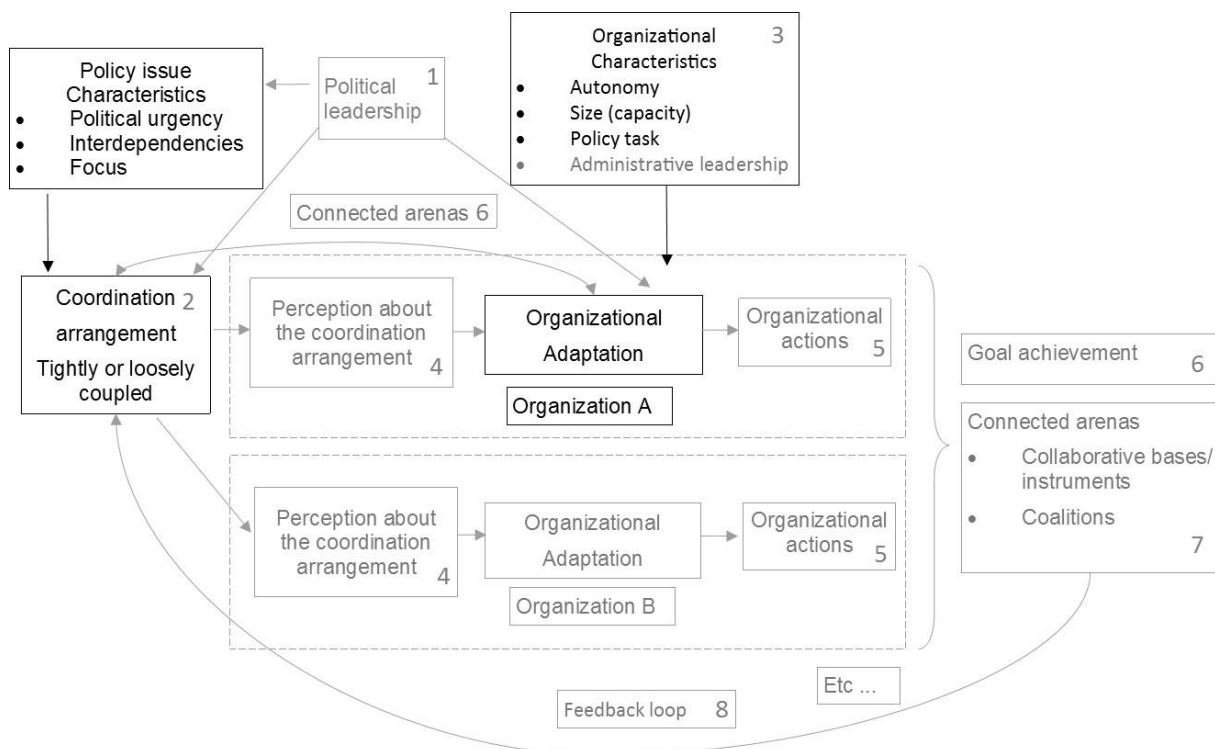
Future research into organizational adaptation can be done in different manners, either in a positivist or constructivist fashion. Implicitly, this thesis followed a functionalist approach. It assumes that a certain organizational structures (i.e. the four elements of structural adaptation) work better to create a positive outcome (i.e. more adaptation). However, the thesis showed the need to incorporate more conditions to explain organizational adaptation, and especially the perception on the coordination arrangement as intermediate factor. The thesis showed the need to embed perceptions. Therefore a more constructivist approach seems to be the way forward (see for more explanation paragraph 6.3).

This thesis started from the beginning of a policy process and traced the process up to the level of the implementers. This is what some authors call forward-mapping (Elmore, 1979). Since the state machinery left the bureaucratic model more and more, it is working differently and far more flexible than a few decades ago. Policy plans often change, incorporate ideas along the way, and have very difficult processes to trace. Backward mapping might be an alternative method to study organizational adaptation. It: *“questions the assumption that explicit policy directives, clear statements of administrative responsibilities, and well-defined outcomes will necessarily increase the likelihood that policies will be successfully implemented”* (Elmore, 1979, p. 604). Starting from the objectives that organizations got, at the bottom of the process, backward mapping measures the operational success up to the original policy intentions.

6.3. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

Studying organizational adaptation and coordination arrangements is difficult task, as this dissertation has shown. The answers to the research questions, and the way in which the concepts are explained and analyzed lead to a few ideas for further research. These can be summarized as shown in Figure 11. The black text and boxes constitute the original conceptual framework. The new concepts, characteristics and ideas are displayed in grey. The latter will be described number by number in the text below the figure.

FIGURE 11: REFINED CONCEPTUAL MODEL



1.) Political leadership

A theory about organizational adaptation should include theoretical expectations about political leadership and urgency. Political leadership is important on different levels.

Firstly, political leaders are capable to be the 'meta-governor' (Sorensen, 2006) and decide on how to govern and design the coordination arrangement. This can be done on the one hand *hands-off*, by designing or facilitating the processes and conditions. On the other hand more *hands-on*, by establishing strong political positions or 'by casting a shadow of hierarchy' to overcome deadlock or stalling (Scharpf, 2000; Sorensen, 2006; Voets et al., 2015). For instance, political leaders have a task in setting clear priorities. Many interviewees point out that the success of many coordination processes (and the subsequent organizational adaptation) are also a question of how well the cross-cutting objectives are

set, and how clear the framework is. In other words, some goals or sets of goals allow for leeway in their interpretation. If goals are ambiguous (Chun & Rainey, 2005), organizations can press for one definition over another and allocate resources different internally in pursuit of this choice (Pandey & Wright, 2005), which enhances the chance for overlap and un-harmonized policy. Especially in the Flemish Government this political leadership is important, because they are the only hierarchical overruling actors.

Second, policy issues inhibit characteristics, but some characteristics can be ‘tamed’ by political actors, for instance, by giving the assignment to solve the problem to a few actors. This reduces the likelihood of conflicts (Roberts, 2000). Reducing the number of actors reduces interdependencies and subsequently the institutional uncertainty (Head, 2008). Thirdly, political leaders can directly influence the organizational adaptation processes. As the thesis showed, cross-cutting policy objectives are often seen a side-issue by organizations, unless the minister pays attention and encourages the organization to implement the goal. The interviewees stress a decline in adaptation, usefulness, and legitimacy for the objectives, when ministers do not pay attention to objectives and instruments. Organizations do not seem to adapt to new ways of thinking until a significant threshold of political urgency is crossed (this also followed from research by Jones & Baumgartner, 2008). Interviewees stress on the one hand sometimes the absence of a political leader who prioritizes the objectives, on the other hand others stipulate that their portfolio minister places attention on the incorporation of cross-cutting objectives. The latter seem bring about an incentive to prioritize the objectives in the organization.

2.) Coordination arrangement

Future research can focus on discussing the roles of the various individual elements and instruments of a coordination arrangement, to see how variations in these instruments influence organizational adaptation and goal achievement. A possible research angle can be to study *collaborative bases*. For instance, by looking at which instruments could *stimulate* cross-cutting collaboration. For instance, the inflexible government budget is according to many respondents a main source of implementation deficit. Cross-cutting policies are often established late in the legislative term, when budgets are already set (see also 6 et al., 1999). In terms of financial possibilities, options are in this case limited. Shifting budgets or re-allocating internal budget to a cross-cutting objective is difficult. Furthermore, it is hard to spread budgets across different organizations, which are organized vertically, per portfolio minister. Pooling of budgets could create an extra incentive to cooperate. Other instruments to study in further research (see also point 8 – feedback loop) could be ‘shared accountability’ and how cross-cutting objectives can be integrated in vertical accountability

systems (Thomson & Perry, 2006; Voets et al., 2015) or the consolidation of policy cycles (i.e. of policy design, implementation and evaluation – see Verhoest et al., 2007),

3.) Administrative leadership

On the administrative level we see some of the same issues come to a front as on the political level. The Q-sort points out that attention from the top-management is essential and has a strong influence on how strongly the organization adapts to the cross-cutting policy objectives. This has also been mentioned in many other studies (Bakvis & Juillet, 2004; Boyle, 1999). Linking pins are sometimes appointed to implement a cross-cutting goal in the organization, but do not feel ‘a back-up’ from the management or other parts of the organization. They stress that the organization is internally fragmented, causing a situation in which the linking pins feels no support of the rest of the organization nor the management.

4.) Perception about the coordination arrangement

Organizations face multiple ‘environmental demands’. Cross-cutting policy objectives are often only one of the many other policy demands. The thesis pointed out that public organizations have to ‘weigh’ different priorities and goals coming from different ministers, other organizations, external stakeholders etc. Explaining organizational adaptation by looking to the coordination arrangement and the organizational characteristics is too straightforward. It needs a more fine-grained measure about how policy demands are ‘weighed’ by the organization. As described before the perception about the coordination arrangement and the organization-specific interpretation thereof is seen as an intermediate variable which can explain the organizational adaptation process more thoroughly. This implies that the fit between the coordination arrangement (seen as environmental demand), the organizational perception and interpretation of that arrangement (as filtering process) and the organizational characteristics should be object of further research to explain organizational adaptation.

5.) Organizational actions

The way in which structural adaptation was measured (de jure by looking what is in the planning documents, and de facto by asking for perceptions) says nothing about the actually performed activities, what motivates organizations to incorporate these goals and ‘the internal life of the organization’. A theory about organizational adaptation necessitates questions about why, how and what the organizations actually do in terms of substantive actions regarding cross-cutting objectives, next to the extent of structural adaptation (i.e. goal-setting, monitoring, budgeting and assigning responsibilities). Furthermore, actions to comply with cross-cutting demands are performed in multiple organizations (connected

arenas - Benz, 2007), which in conjunction tells us something about the goal achievement towards these cross-cutting policy issues.

6.) Goal achievement

The focus of this thesis was on coordination as a process (Wollmann, 2003), and did not focus on the result of the actual performed activities, i.e. the outcomes of the cross-cutting policy program. However, the actions performed say something about this outcome and goal achievement. Studying this can be done by studying goal achievement as *programmatic operational success*. This is the extent to which a policy program is implemented according to objectives laid down. As March and McConnell (2010, p. 573) describe; goal achievement can be considered policy success, especially in complex coordination arenas.

7.) Connected arenas (Benz, 2007)

This thesis tried to incorporate some elements of the connectedness of the central coordination arena and the organizational arena. However, this was not done in depth. The thesis only took in account the central level and the organizational level, though there are many other connected arenas *between* the central and organizational arena. Benz (2007) stresses the connectedness of different arenas. We can discern different connections between arenas.

Firstly, the *coordination arena and organizational arena*: a study of the mandates, the resources and the power bases that organizations have and can bring to the cross-cutting policy arena would be an insightful addition to our currently deployed approach. This could add information about why some organizations do not adapt.

Second, the connectedness of multiple *organizational arenas* could be object of study. Some respondents mention bottom-up networks and cross-cutting initiatives which emerge without a central coordination arena. This can be studied by focusing on actual collaborations to reach cross-cutting objectives, which has not been done in this thesis. For instance, some organizations form coalitions for, or against cross-cutting objectives which they pursue, for example through connected arenas or through political contacts.

8.) Feedback loop

On the basis of the goal achievement of the organizations, administrative and political champions, the network or individual actors can decide to alter dimensions of the coordination arrangement. This asks for thorough overthinking how to evaluate cross-cutting programs, goal achievement and mandates. It is for instance important to stress who bears the ultimate responsibility, and who is (made) competent for monitoring and evaluation. These mandates should be clear, to prevent legitimacy issues and to prioritize evaluation of goal achievement and the functioning of the coordination arrangement.

To sum up, organizational adaptation is a process which is difficult to trace and study. Many factors play a role and have different effects, depending on their combination with other factors. However, studying this process and looking for ways to develop the knowledge about coordination arrangements and organizational adaptation further remains important, because policy challenges ask for coherent policy responses and governments are in search of tools and instruments that can help them accomplish this task.

7. SUMMARY

The institutional complexity inherent to the governmental apparatus and the agencification trend of recent decades make reaching a coordinated response to new policy demands a challenge for public organizations. In this thesis cross-cutting policy objectives are seen as new policy demands for organizations to which they can comply or not. This compliance process is called organizational adaptation. How to strengthen and explain organizational adaptation, adds to the theoretical and substantive knowledge about the design of coordination arrangements and the influence of certain policy and organizational characteristics. Horizontal cross-cutting policy objectives are particularly interesting to study, because they challenge the governmental apparatus to respond. The strongly agencified Flemish Government — in which relationships between organizations are strictly non-hierarchical and horizontal coordination mechanisms are underdeveloped — is selected to study the coordination and organizational adaptation process.

On the basis of their policy characteristics, including political urgency, interdependencies between organizations and the focus of the policy (either internal management issues or external substantive policy issues) three very different cross-cutting policy objectives were chosen as object of study. By using eight coordination dimensions — developed based on the Institutional Development Framework of Elinor Ostrom — we study which coordination arrangements are deployed in 1) austerity measures, 2) administrative simplification and 3) Integrated Youth Care. These coordination dimensions prove to be suitable to grasp the hybridity of coordination arrangements.

In line with expectations, very different coordination arrangements are disentangled: a tight arrangement in the austerity measures, a mixed in administrative simplification and a loosely coupled coordination arrangement in Integrated Youth Care. Authority (exercised by superiors) is the prime causal factor to coordinate organizations in tightly coupled coordination arrangements. A loosely coupled coordination arrangement lies on the other end of the continuum and is similar to self-organization.

In particular, political urgency and interdependencies seem to have a strong influence on the design of coordination arrangements. Strongly expressing political urgency can lead to the establishment of strong political champions, and subsequently ‘taming strategies’. Such strategies can reduce complexity and interdependencies through centralization of decision-making or clear priorities. Moreover, political leadership is important, because these actors can be the ‘meta-governor’ and therefore both design the coordination arrangement (hands-off approach) or directly coordinate organizations, for instance by ‘casting a shadow of

hierarchy' (hands-on approach). The focus of policy issues does not necessarily bring about a certain coordination form. However, a focus on clients or society often informs the design and can lead to a more loosely coupled coordination arrangement.

Organizational adaptation is studied in ten organizations of two ministries, by triangulation of methods and data. Four elements referring to structural adaptation are the main focus, in terms of data collection: the extent to which the organization 1) aligns its organizational goals, 2) monitors the cross-cutting policy objectives, 3) allocates resources, and 4) appoints tasks and responsibilities to specific staff members with respect to the cross-cutting objectives. Firstly, a content analysis of organizational planning documents is used to study how organizations address the cross-cutting objectives. Secondly, a Q-sort study among organizational linking pins — responsible for implementing cross-cutting objectives into their organizations — enriches the data from the document analysis, by adding perceptual data. These two measurements are combined to create an in-depth method to study organizational adaptation.

The influence of the coordination arrangement and three different organizational characteristics (size, degree of autonomy and policy task) are included to study and explain structural organizational adaptation. Multiple angles are analyzed with FsQCA. This analysis shows that there is a big difference between departments and agencies. Departments, which by definition have policy development task, adapt to a high extent to cross-cutting policy objectives. They are tasked with coordination, and focus especially on adapting and preparing policy texts, visions etc., which might be easier than adaptation in terms of actions. The latter is mainly the task of agencies. A tight coordination arrangement seems to induce large departments to adapt, and a loose coordination arrangement leads small departments to adapt. Organizations with a policy implementation task are adapting, in general, to a low extent. Large organizations with a policy implementation task seem to have room to ignore the tightly coupled coordination arrangement and adapt subsequently to a low extent. Small policy implementing organizations will adapt, under loosely coupled coordination arrangements, to a low extent.

Studying organizational adaptation and coordination arrangements is difficult task. Explanations for organizational adaptation almost seem to be organization specific. The original conceptual framework — including the influence of policy characteristics on the coordination arrangement and, secondly, the influence of the coordination arrangement and organizational characteristics on organizational adaptation — is too straightforward. On the basis of the analysis we add a few extra 'building blocks' to the conceptual framework.

Coordination is seen as a process in this thesis, and did not focus on the actual organizational actions and goal achievement. However, a study of organizational adaptation

necessitates questions about why, how and what the organizations actually do in terms of substantive actions. Future research can therefore take up this angle and focus on the goal achievement of the intended objectives, as set in the policy program. Moreover, to reach the intended program the goal achievement of multiple organizations has to be taken into account. A possible research angle is to study collaborative bases, instruments and coalitions that organizations have and use to reach the intended cross-cutting objectives. This asks for thorough overthinking how to evaluate the goal achievement and the coordination arrangement deployed in cross-cutting programs.

Another angle, which is not incorporated in the current thesis, is that organizations face multiple 'environmental demands', which they have to 'weigh' to other internal demands, like their core-business. The perception about the coordination arrangement seems to add to the explanation about how the organization weighs the 'environmental demands'. Some arrangements are for instance seen as a numeral exercise, too intrusive or an overburdening in terms of participation in network structures. Lastly, how political and administrative leadership can strengthen this process and help to set priorities and clear objectives can be object of future research.

In summary, organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives is a process which cannot be unambiguously interpreted. Many factors play a role. However, studying and looking for collaborative bases and coordination instruments which leads the government apparatus to respond coherently to new policy demands remains important. Predominantly because society is constantly changing, and because governments throughout the world continue their search to find solutions for new policy demands and coordination challenges.

8. SAMENVATTING

De institutionele complexiteit van de overheid, onder andere door de verzelfstandigingstrend van de afgelopen decennia, maakt dat het bereiken van een gecoördineerde reactie op nieuwe en complexe beleidsproblemen vaak een uitdaging is. In dit proefschrift bekijken we horizontale beleidsdoelstellingen als een nieuwe uitdaging voor organisaties, die zij kunnen naleven of niet. Dit 'naleving-proces' wordt organisatie adaptatie genoemd. Inzicht in hoe dit nalevingsproces kan worden versterkt en de invloed van bepaalde beleids- en organisatorische kenmerken, is nuttig voor het ontwerpen van coördinatieprocessen en -instrumenten. Horizontale beleidsdoelstellingen zijn interessant om te bestuderen, omdat het komen tot een coherente beleidsreactie bij dergelijke doelstellingen vaak complex is. De sterk verzelfstandigde Vlaamse Overheid — zonder hiërarchie tussen organisaties en met onderontwikkelde horizontale coördinatiemechanismen — is gekozen om coördinatie en organisatie adaptatie te bestuderen.

Op basis van hun beleidskenmerken, politieke urgentie, onderlinge afhankelijkheden tussen organisaties en de focus van het beleid (zowel interne managementvraagstukken als externe inhoudelijke beleidskwesties) zijn drie zeer verschillende beleidsdoelstellingen geselecteerd om te bestuderen. Met behulp van acht coördinatie dimensies — ontwikkeld op basis van het 'Institutional Development Framework' van Elinor Ostrom — brengen we in kaart welke arrangementen worden gebruikt om 1) besparingen, 2) administratieve vereenvoudiging en 3) Integrale Jeugdhulp te coördineren. Deze coördinatie dimensies zijn geschikt om de hybriditeit van de coördinatie-arrangementen te ontrafelen. In de lijn der verwachting kunnen er drie zeer verschillende arrangementen worden ontward: een strakke coördinatie vorm in de besparingen, een mengvorm in administratieve vereenvoudiging en losse coördinatie in Integrale Jeugdhulp. In strak georganiseerde coördinatie-arrangementen vormt autoriteit (uitgeoefend door bovengeschieden) de belangrijkste factor om organisaties aan te sturen. Een losse vorm van coördinatie ligt aan de andere kant van het continuüm en is vergelijkbaar met zelforganisatie.

Vooraf politieke urgentie en onderlinge afhankelijkheden blijken een sterke invloed te hebben op het ontwerp van coördinatie-arrangementen. Politieke urgentie kan leiden tot het benoemen van administratieve trekkers met sterke mandaten, en de mogelijkheid tot het introduceren van strategieën die complexiteit kunnen 'temmen'. Dergelijke strategieën kunnen bijvoorbeeld de onderlinge afhankelijkheid verminderen door centralisatie van de besluitvorming en het stellen van duidelijke prioriteiten. Bovendien is politiek leiderschap

belangrijk, vooral omdat deze actoren de 'meta-coördinatie' kunnen opnemen en kunnen beslissen over het ontwerp van de coördinatie-arrangementen (hands-off benadering) of direct organisaties kunnen coördineren, bijvoorbeeld door politieke druk te zetten (hands-on benadering). De focus die een beleidsvraagstuk heeft, leidt niet per se tot een zekere coördinatie vorm. Echter, aandacht voor cliënten, de samenleving of burgers leidt wel vaak tot inclusie van stakeholders en daardoor tot een meer losse vorm van coördinatie.

Organisatie adaptatie is bestudeerd in tien organisaties uit twee beleidsdomeinen, door triangulatie van methoden en data. Vier elementen die te maken hebben met *structurele* adaptatie zijn de belangrijkste focus: de mate waarin de organisatie 1) de organisatiedoelen aanpast aan de horizontale doelstellingen, 2) de horizontale beleidsdoelstellingen monitort, 3) budget toekent aan de beleidsdoelstellingen, en 4) taken en verantwoordelijkheden aan specifieke medewerkers toewijst. In de eerste plaats is er een inhoudsanalyse van planningsdocumenten uitgevoerd om te onderzoeken hoe organisaties de horizontale doelstellingen opnemen in hun documenten. Met behulp van Q-methodologie zijn, ten tweede, interviews uitgevoerd met 'linking pins'. Dit zijn medewerkers die verantwoordelijk zijn voor de implementatie van horizontale doelstellingen in hun organisatie. Deze studie verrijkt de data van de inhoudsanalyse door het toevoegen van perceptie data. De verschillende metingen zijn gecombineerd om een grondig beeld te schetsen van organisatie-adaptatie.

De invloed van de coördinatie-arrangementen en drie verschillende organisatie kenmerken (grootte, mate van autonomie en de beleidstaak) worden gebruikt als verklarend model voor structurele organisatie adaptatie. De FsQCA analyse laat zien dat er een groot verschil is tussen departementen en agentschappen. Departementen, die per definitie een beleidsvoorbereidende taak hebben, passen zich in hoge mate aan. Zij zijn belast met coördinatie en focussen zich vooral op de aanpassing en de voorbereiding van beleidsteksten, -visies, etc. Dit is waarschijnlijk gemakkelijker dan een organisatie aanpassen op het niveau van acties. Dit laatste is vooral de taak van agentschappen. Een strak gecoördineerd arrangement lijkt in het geval van grote departementen te leiden tot aanpassing, een los coördinatie-arrangement leidt tot aanpassing van kleine departementen. Agentschappen met een uitvoerende beleidstaak passen zich, over het algemeen, in geringe mate aan. Grote agentschappen met een uitvoerende beleidstaak lijken ruimte te hebben om het strakke gecoördineerde arrangement te negeren en zich vervolgens in lage mate aan te passen. Kleine uitvoerende agentschappen, passen zich onder een losse coördinatie vorm in geringe mate aan.

Het bestuderen van organisatie-adaptatie en coördinatie-arrangementen blijkt een moeilijke taak. Verklaringen voor organisatie-adaptatie lijken bijna organisatie specifiek te

zijn. Het originele conceptueel kader — met inclusie van beleidskenmerken enerzijds, en anderzijds de invloed van het coördinatie-arrangement en organisatorische kenmerken — is te eenvoudig. Op basis van de analyse en de resultaten kunnen we een paar extra 'bouwstenen' toevoegen aan het conceptuele kader.

Coördinatie wordt gezien als een proces in dit proefschrift, en focust niet op de werkelijke organisatorische acties of doelrealisatie. Echter, een studie over organisatie adaptatie zou noodzakelijkerwijs wel moeten ingaan op waarom, hoe en wat de organisaties daadwerkelijk doen in termen van acties. Toekomstige studies kunnen daarom de focus leggen op deze doelrealisatie, in termen van de oorspronkelijk beoogde doelstellingen, zoals vastgesteld in bijvoorbeeld een beleidsprogramma. Bovendien zou een dergelijk kader rekening moeten houden met doelbereiking van meerdere organisaties. Een mogelijke invalshoek voor toekomstig onderzoek kan zijn om te bekijken welke instrumenten, coalities of gezamenlijke gronden organisaties hebben en gebruiken om de beoogde horizontale doelstellingen te bereiken. Dat vraagt om het grondig nadenken over hoe doelrealisatie en coördinatie-arrangementen geëvalueerd kunnen worden.

Een andere invalshoek voor toekomstig onderzoek is dat organisaties geconfronteerd worden met meerdere 'beleidseisen' die zij moeten afwegen ten opzichte van bijvoorbeeld hun corebusiness. Het toevoegen van de perceptie over het coördinatie-arrangement als intermediaire factor kan kennis toevoegen over hoe een organisatie deze eisen afweegt. Sommige arrangementen worden bijvoorbeeld gezien als 'cijferfetisjisme', te 'intrusief', of als een overbelasting in termen van deelname aan netwerkstructuren. Tot slot, hoe politieke en ambtelijke sturing dit proces kan versterken en kan helpen om prioriteiten duidelijk te stellen, kan een onderwerp zijn voor toekomstig onderzoek.

Samengevat, organisatie adaptatie is een proces dat niet eenduidig kan worden geïnterpreteerd. Vele factoren spelen een rol. Echter, het bestuderen en op zoek gaan naar samenwerkingsverbanden en coördinatie-instrumenten en hoe deze kunnen leiden tot een coherente beleidsreactie blijft een belangrijk onderwerp in de bestuurskunde. Vooral omdat de maatschappij voortdurend verandert en overheden wereldwijd op zoek zijn naar oplossingen voor hun coördinatie problemen en complexe beleidsuitdagingen.

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Annex 1: Tight or loose coupling

	<div> <div>Tight coupling</div> <div>←</div> <div></div> <div>→</div> <div>Loose coupling</div> </div>			
Participant constellation	Closed/restricted, ordered linkages, Multi-level (more than two) linkages within the ministry	Permanent coalition multi-level (more than two) linkages within the ministry	Ad-hoc relationships (based on committee-, advisory work). Multiple juxtaposed agencies or departments, cross-ministry	Open/fluent, ad-hoc temporary, horizontal linkages, Multiple juxtaposed agencies, departments and external stakeholders
Political positions	Unilateral coercive government regulation (with executive orders)-agreement, strong position entire government	Interministerial committee, bi- or multi-lateral agreements	Lead minister governed - negotiated covenants, without regulation or executive orders	Lead minister governed, with voluntary contribution, no written agreement
Administrative positions	Administrative organization governed (separately created)	Lead organization (either department or agency) governed	Network governed	Internally participant governed
Room for action	Rule	Norm	Strategy	Statement
Information	Direct formal information, standardized information. Everybody the same task and information	Direct formal information, standardized information. Everybody different task	Information from a coordination function, with possibility to 'notice and comment'	Informal communication, information with room to maneuver.
Power distribution	Leader takes decisions, with mandate, sanctions – incentives	Unicentric, e.g. coordinator without sanctions – incentives	Multiple participants, democratic decision-making	Pluricentric; coordinators in multiple organizations
Accountability	Performance-based accountability, with sanctions or rewards, with possibility to investigate actual institutional behavior (e.g. inspections)	Institutional answerability to specific coordination function, with sanctions or rewards	Institutional answerability to specific coordination function, no inspections, sanctions or rewards	Dissemination and access to information, no sanctions or inspections - Peer review
Intensity	Collaboration: synergize to create something new/systems change	Coordination of otherwise independent action; joint effort/joint planning	Cooperation: dialogue, information sharing	Informal

Annex 2: Instruments of the Flemish Government

Annual report

The annual report of the organization contains an overview of the progress on (strategic and operational) organizational goals stemming from the multi-annual performance agreement.

Business plans

A business plan is the yearly translation of the multi-annual performance agreement and, if relevant, new initiatives of the minister. The organization describes in this document how it will achieve the goals which were put forward in the multi-annual performance agreement. This is an internal planning document, outlining detailed actions, which enables the senior management to control the daily operations throughout the organization.

CAG (in Dutch: College van Ambtenaren-Generaal)

The CAG is a horizontal group, Flemish Government wide, which consists of one leading civil servant of each ministry (thirteen in total). This council has the formal, decision making power about Flemish Government-wide harmonization, coordination and control of internal, operational matters.

Management committee

The management committee is a forum where all the leading civil servants of one ministry come together, to discuss and set out policy objectives to control the ministry.

Multi-annual performance agreement

The multi-annual performance agreement contains the rights and obligations of both the minister and the organization (department or agency). With the document both parties mutually agree on the organizational goals and the deliverables (outputs). Furthermore, it is a formal document to ensure the resources to achieve organizational goals. The use of the performance and strategic agreements as a steering instrument has been, since the major BBB-reform of the Flemish government in 2006, intended as a catalyst for internal organizational change and has potential coordination benefits for both the Flemish Government/ministers and leading civil servants of department and agencies (Ministerie Van De Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 2001, pp. 19–21).

Policy council

The policy council has the same function as the management committee, but these meetings are attended by the minister responsible for the ministry.

Annex 3: Word queries

Word queries		
Austerity measures	Administrative simplification	Integrated Youth Care
Saving(s), staff savings, austerity, austerity measure(s), budget (cuts), number of employees, staff reduction, personnel reduction, heads, workforce staff expenditure, staff appropriations, staff numbers, reduce, reduce staffing budget, personnel budget	"administrative simplification", deregulation, regulation management, "qualitative regulation", red tape, planning burden, planning burden reduction, "administrative burden", Regulatory Impact Analysis, RIA, "standard cost model", cral, regulation.	"Integrated Youth Care ", IYC, Intersectoral Portal, NRTJ, RTJ, A-document

Annex 4: Interviews

# of respondent	Who	Used for?
Respondent 1	Participant coordination arena	Description coordination-arrangement, preparation Q-sort
Respondent 2	Participant coordination arena	Q-sort
Respondent 3	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 4	Participant coordination arena	Q-sort
Respondent 5	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 6	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 7	Participant coordination arena	Q-sort
Respondent 8	Participant coordination arena	Q-sort
Respondent 9	External expert	Q-sort
Respondent 10	Participant coordination arena	Q-sort
Respondent 11	Political champion	Q-sort
Respondent 12	External expert	Q-sort
Respondent 13	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 14	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 15	External expert	Q-sort
Respondent 16	Political champion	Q-sort
Respondent 17	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 18	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 19	Administrative champion	Q-sort
Respondent 20	Extra interview – respondent not attached to one of the cross-cutting policy objectives under study	Preparation Q-sort
Respondent 21	Extra interview – respondent not attached to one of the cross-cutting policy objectives under study	Preparation Q-sort
Respondent 22	Extra interview – respondent not attached to one of the cross-cutting policy objectives under study	Preparation Q-sort
Respondent 23	Extra interview – respondent not attached to one of the cross-cutting policy objectives under study	Preparation Q-sort
Respondent 24	Extra interview – respondent not attached to one of the cross-cutting policy objectives under study	Preparation Q-sort
Respondent 25	Extra interview – respondent not attached to one of the cross-cutting policy objectives under study	Preparation Q-sort
Respondent 26	Administrative champion	Description coordination-arrangement
Respondent 27	Administrative champion	Description coordination-arrangement
Respondent 28	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 29	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 30	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 31	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 32	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 33	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 34	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 35	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 36	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 37	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 38	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 39	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 40	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 42	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 43	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 44	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 45	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 46	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 47	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 48	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 49	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 50	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 51	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 52	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 53	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 54	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort

Respondent 55	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 56	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort
Respondent 57	Organizational linking pin	Q-sort

Annex 5: Statements organizational adaptation

My organization integrates the austerity measures, integrated youth care and administrative simplification in the following way in the organization			
Adaptation in terms of	DESIGNATIVE	EVALUATIVE	ADVOCATIVE
CULTURE	(Respondent 1 & 6) There is a lot of material, but that is not easy to swallow, you must personally 'translate' it, with your staff	(Respondent 7 & 15) You need to have staff in the organization who want to invest in it. For cross-cutting policy objectives they have to put it up a notch or do some things more explicit	(Respondent 1 & 21) As an organization, you should only collaborate if it has a value for the customer/ client
	(respondent 25) It requires attention of the management: coaching staff, be ready to help with problems and doubts	(Respondent 9) We act sometimes like we are vulnerable and in need of help, in order to obtain cooperation	(Respondent 3 & 10) You will find the cross-cutting policy objective everywhere in our operations, because it is a change of mentality
	(Respondent 20) On managerial topics we find comprises with other organizations easily, on policy substantive issues less	(Respondent 11) Currently, there are actually many good collaborations, why? Because we realize that we have too few employees, we should not reinvent the wheel	(Respondent 14) I think our organization should be much more flexible and has to work programmatically
STRUCTURE	(Respondent 21) Maybe there is a gain on the overall government level, but for us cross-cutting policy objectives are often a loss	(Respondent 6 & 3) The top management usually knows what should be done, but that is not communicated to the middle management and the street level bureaucrat level	(Respondent 22) The objective is fed back to our own management team, and also to the management committee and the policy council of our ministry
	(Respondent 22) The expertise of our organization is large enough to translate the very vague objectives to concrete actions	(Respondent 11) The cross-cutting policy objective is a topic in the evaluation of the top civil servant, and also in individual planning meetings	(Respondent 21) In our organization the objective is part of the monitoring system, based on that we can take good management decisions
	(Respondent 6 & 1) We assigned the objective to a few staff-members, but they have other assignments as well	(Respondent 14) We have linked budget to the cross-cutting objective	(Respondent 25) As management team you should be willing to discuss this objective on a regular basis

MYTH	(Respondent 8) That cross-cutting policy objective is not really an action, that it is in our documents does not mean that we are very active	(Respondent 11) The cross-cutting objectives are only a very small piece of our workload, they're not going to throw us out if we score well on the rest	(Respondent 2 & 8) The cross-cutting objective is only marginally mentioned in our documents, as in "we contribute to ... ", but that is very ad-hoc
	(Respondent 16) We are sometimes a bit 'creative' in our reports, there is not much control anyways	(Respondent 4) The jargon that is often associated with the goals, ... you cannot understand it	(Respondent 24) The minister sometimes asks: how are you progressing on the objective? But that is actually a minor point, attention often goes to the main priorities of the minister

Annex 6: Q-sort grid – organizational adaptation

When integrating the cross-cutting policy objectives, my organization is experiencing the following elements

DISAGREE	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	AGREE
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.
		19.	20.	21.	22.	23.		
				24.				

DISAGREE	NEUTRAL (OR IRRELEVANT)	AGREE
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Annex 7: Interview protocol (based on van Exel & De Graaf, 2005)

This interview is part of a study which focuses on the way in which the Flemish government coordinates cross-cutting policy objectives (focused on internal management as well as external objectives, on the society) and how Flemish organizations integrate these objectives into their internal structures. Cross-cutting objectives go beyond organizational boundaries and need an integrated coordination response. Some examples: equal opportunities policy, poverty, Integrated Youth care, austerity measures and administrative simplification.

1. We are curious about the experiences of your organization. You have been selected because you are in your organization responsible for one of the objectives that we are studying. Your name and the name of the organization will remain completely anonymous. We report only on the aggregate level, for example, only about big/small organizations or departments compared to organizations with more autonomy.
2. During the interview, we are going to sort a set of cards with statements about the extent to which your organization adapts to the cross-cutting objective. By this we mean the extent to which the organization translates the goal to organizational specific goals, budget, responsibilities etc.
3. Take the 24 cards in your hand. All 24 cards in the set deal with organizational adaptation to cross-cutting policy objectives. The question is to rank order these on a scale, to the extent to which you agree with the statements on the cards, from the perspective of your organization. The numbers on the cards (from 1 to 24) are randomly placed on the cards and have no meaning.
4. Read the 24 statements carefully out loud and divide them into three piles: a pile for statements with which you disagree, a stack of cards with which you agree, and a stack of cards about which you are indifferent, or for the cards which are not applicable or not relevant to you.
5. Use the three boxes "AGREE", "NEUTRAL or irrelevant" and "DISAGREE". When you have finished sorting the statements we will continue with the next

step. If you think that a statement is unclear, I will clarify it. While sorting the cards, you may think aloud, so you can give first reflections about the statements immediately. After sorting, we will discuss the 'extreme scores'.

6. Take the cards from the "AGREE" pile and read them again. Select the two statements with which you agree most and place them in the box on the right of the grid (vertical order does not matter), under number "9 (agree)". Then select the two statements with which you agree most of the remaining cards and place them in the two boxes under the number "8". Follow this procedure for all cards from the "AGREE" pile.
7. Take the cards of the "DISAGREE" pile and read them again. As in the previous step, select the two statements you disagree with most strongly, and place them in the first box on the left of the table, under "1 (disagree)." Follow this procedure for all cards of the "DISAGREE" pile.
8. Finally, take the remaining cards and read them again. Arrange the cards in the other, still empty boxes of the grid.
9. When all cards are placed, you may of course shift some cards, if you wish.

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